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In This Issue

BUCK OR BULL FOR $35
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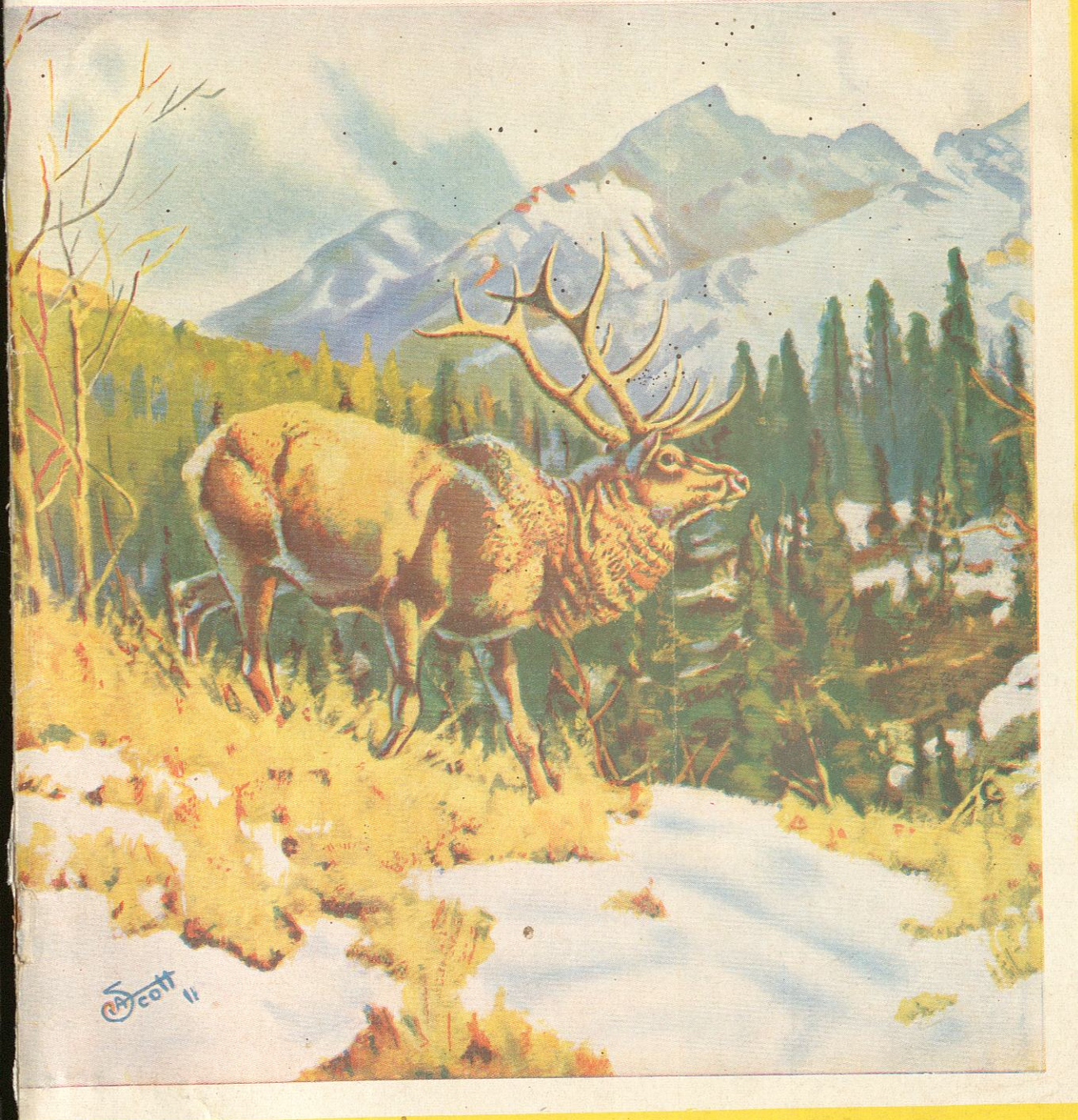

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In The Chibougamau Region

By Mortimer Norton

(Photos by Dr. Joe W. Conrad and Mr. Walter A. Gross.

ADVENTUROUS anglers who are looking for new grounds to explore, where game fish thrive in abundance and grow to fabulous sizes, will be greatly interested in the exceptional sport awaiting them in the famed Chibougamau region of northern Quebec Province.

Here in a vast expanse of wilderness country, where civilization has scarcely become entrenched, you can catch your share of big fish in many pellucid lakes and rivers—some having yet to be visited by anyone other than wandering bands of native Indians. This is truly a marvelous land for stalwart sportsmen.

Among the waters that provide exciting action and splendid strings of speckled and lake trout, northern pike, walleyes, whitefish, and "pan" species, there are four which deserve special attention at present. These are Lakes Chibougamau, Dore, Waconichi, and Mistassini. Men who desire to try their luck in this region ask for details about these lakes more often than any others, for the brand of fishing they make possible is beginning to be heard about with increasing volume in many parts of the continent.

During the past year, for instance, several widely scattered readers of this department wrote for information on the fishing conditions at one or another of the lakes mentioned. They also wanted to know how best to reach the area and what accommodations exist there.

In view of these inquiries, then, we gathered some facts about the situation from certain reliable sources, and the details, given below, should be of assistance to all others who may plan to embark late next spring or summer, or at a later date, on an expedition to the Chibougamau district.

Walter A. Gross, New York state, with two huge lake trout he caught on one trip out on Lake Waconichi. Trout on the left weighed 32 pounds. Gross is holding a 30 pounder.

Much of our lore comes from Dr. and Mrs. Joseph W. Conrad and daughter Tudie, of Little Falls, N. Y., who spent their vacation at Chibougamau last July, and from Walter Gross, living near Amsterdam, N. Y., who visited this region for the third time last summer, flying on to Lake Waconichi where he and his friends had remarkable success in fishing.

By spreading out a good map of Quebec Province, such as appears on the official "Highway Map of Canada and the United States", issued by the Canadian Government Travel Bureau at Ottawa, you will find that by driving from Quebec City on highways 54 and 54A through the Laurentides Park to Lake St. John, you skirt its western shore to Roberval and roll on to the village of St. Felicien on the Ashuapmouchuan River—the jumping off place for Chibougamau.

At St. Felicien the paved road ends, but you continue northwest over a new crushed stone highway for 150 miles, until it is blocked by a grove of spruce trees at the settlement of Chibougamau. What required a month of travel by canoe or dogsled years ago may now be covered in around three hours by auto . . . and much less by airplane!

Enroute from St. Felicien, you motor through the recently opened Chibougamau Fish and Game Reserve, which is 90 miles long and 20 miles wide. At the south gate you pause to obtain a Reserve pass and a travel permit, then at the north gate you surrender the pass but retain the permit. Your trip through the Reserve is timed, and word of it telephoned to the opposite gate, so you should not plan any unscheduled delays for fishing along the way.

The "Circulation Permit" is a must for all travelers without exception. Regarding it, the Quebec Department of Fish and Game says:

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On the highway through the Chi-

(Continued on Page 3)

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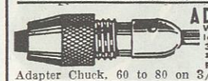

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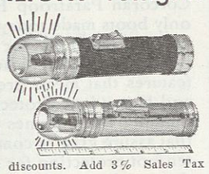

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E. J. Dailey, *Question Box Editor*. Ben C. Robinson, *Fishing Editor*.

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bougamau Reserve you pass Lake Chigobiche, about 15 miles long, which is one of the best fishing spots in the area. There are a few rough camps on the lake shore, made by the road-building crew. If you wish to try its waters for angling action, notify the station guard upon entering the Reserve.

Near Mile 118 on the Chibougamau road, you cross over the "Height of Land", where all rivers to the north flow into the Arctic Circle, and all rivers to the south flow into the St. Lawrence River.

Dr. Conrad advises that the driving speed should not exceed 35 miles per hour along the stone highway, or the tires may become ruined. A few extra pounds of air should be added to the tires if you have a rather heavy load aboard. A station-wagon is ideal for this kind of journey, where nearly all your essential equipment, including an outboard motor and extra gasoline, has to be brought in.

The trip from St. Felicien through the unbroken wilderness should be undertaken during the daytime, for the shoulders of the road are soft and there are no guard rails. It is an all-weather road, though, and is kept open the entire year. At present, you won't find any gasoline stations between St. Felicien and Chibougamau.

A railroad will be constructed, it is said, in a year or two from St. Felicien, eventually to run beyond Chibougamau to James Bay and then connect with the railroad at Maniwaki. It will make this fish and game paradise altogether too readily accessible for thousands of anglers and hunters, but the railroad is needed chiefly to facilitate bringing out a tremendous amount of raw materials mined in the region.

If you wish to vary your mode of travel, as Dr. Conrad and his family did, you can drive your auto onto the excursion boat at Montreal or Quebec City and sail down the St. Lawrence River and up the spectacular Saguenay River as far as Bagotville.

From there you drive through Chicoutimi and on to Lake St. John. In this district approximately one-quarter million dollars worth of newsprint paper is shipped daily. Considerable aluminum is produced in this area also, and farming and lumbering are important occupations. Wild blueberries, largest of their kind in the world, are exported in great quantities.

From St. Felicien there is a daily bus service to Chibougamau, or you can fly in by means of the Boreal Airways and save much valuable time if your vacation is short. The Mont Laurier Aviation Company has bases at Roberval and Lake Cachee close to the Chibougamau Townsite, and it is kept busy flying in American sportsmen.

At the Montreal airport you can charter a plane and reach your destination —some 300 air miles away—in two hours. You wing over a magnificent spread of forests, lakes, and rivers . . . a thrilling sight never to be forgotten.

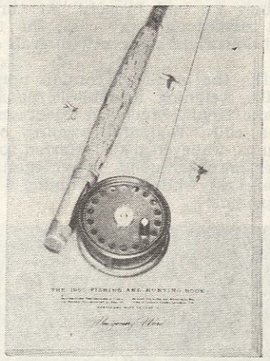
Chibougamau, an Indian word said to mean "meeting place", owes its fame mainly to the mining activities carried on in the region, which embraces some 1,000 square miles to the north and west of Chibougamau Lake. There are rich deposits of iron ore, copper, zinc, gold, aluminum, and other minerals. Thousands of acres of land have been staked out by prospectors, and worked by various companies. Millions of dollars have been spent in developing the mines, and great returns are expected in the near future as facilities are improved.

This is, however, something like the Garden of Eden to the sportsman, for not only is phenomenal fishing afforded, but also excellent hunting. It is one of the best places on the continent for shooting ducks and geese. Black ducks especially may be seen in swarms. Deer and bear are abundant, and it is claimed there are partridges by the thousands. Rabbits are everywhere, and moose dwell in Chibougamau Reserve.

The fishing that may be experienced in the hundreds of lakes in the region, most of which have never been cast upon, is out of this world. Lakes Chibougamau, Dore, Waconichi, and Mistassini are outstanding in this respect. In fact, the story goes that often it is so easy to creel or boat a lot of fish, and big ones, that fellows sometimes get bored and depart to try, for a relief, a lake that has been fished out.

On this score, Dr. Conrad told me, "The fishing was so good, with most of the specimens running large, that on our last day there I actually became tired of catching fish and read the

Three prominent citizens of Chibougamau. Wally McQuade, Larry Wilson, and "Chibougamau Joe", at Rainbow Lodge.



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magazines we had brought. At times, we got strikes on every cast; the fish seemed downright impatient to grab our lures."

Chiefly, the big lakes contain northern pike weighing around 40 pounds, grey lake trout (which the Montagnais Indians call "Touladie") scaling over 50 pounds, walleyed pike (referred to as pickerel or dore) going better than 10 pounds, and whitefish attaining 6 or more pounds.

A day's catch of native lake trout from Lake Waconichi. George Menge holding 28 lb. trout, Casmier Sikorski with 26 pounder, Gordon Rockefeller with 28 pound fish, and Raymond Francisco with a tiny 20 pounder.

In the smaller lakes, and the rivers and streams, speckled trout abound. The tributaries flowing into Chibougamau Lake, for instance, have speckled beauties ranging up to 4 pounds. And there are red, squaretail speckled trout in some waters reaching 8 pounds.

The best time to fish is during June, even though results are generally excellent throughout the season. The ice, from 4 to 6 feet thick in the sub-zero winter, cracks up and disappears in late May. As at other fishing grounds, lively action takes place soon after the ice leaves. However, much depends on water temperature, and the water can be very cold in July and August . . . and the air as well, especially at night when the Northern Lights are flashing, and when a warm sleeping bag is a necessity.

Chibougamau Lake is 20 miles long and 6 miles wide, with dozens of big and small islands, deep-cut bays, and many points and coves. Its deep and shoal waters are crystal clear, in common with other nearby lakes, and the clean, gravely shores are densely rimmed with spruce, balsam, tamarack, aspen, birch, and poplar trees.

The lake drains into the adjoining Lake Dore through two passages—one a brawling stream only a few hundred feet long at a point close to the eastern end of Chibougamau, where stands a cabin known as "Rainbow Lodge" at the junction of the stream with Lake Dore; and a second stream at the northeastern end of Lake Dore where the waters of Machin Bay sweep into Dixon Bay.

In turn, the Chibougamau River, with no direct connection with the lake of its name, drains Lake Dore, flowing westward into a chain of lakes, and finally discharging into the Nottaway River, which continues north into James Bay.

Travel on Lakes Chibougamau and Dore is mainly by heavy canoes, but there is also a small fleet of boats powered by outboard motors. The lakes are suddenly and frequently struck by gales of terrific force, whipping the surfaces up into mountainous waves. For this reason, few men venture out towards the middle of the lakes; they wisely hug the shores or lee sides of islands. Usually they prefer to paddle or motor up Lake Dore rather than Chibougamau, since the former does not get as rough on most occasions.

Rainbow Lodge and its auxiliary cabins, all of peeled and seasoned spruce logs, form the only tourist accommodations on these two lakes at present, but additional lodgings are to be found in the settlement. Otherwise, you bring your own complete tenting outfit. Rainbow Lodge, built and owned by Larry Wilson, is spacious and neat, managed for visiting sportsmen by Wally and Marie McQuade. Here, at the main lodge, the meals prepared by Mrs. McQuade are excellent and the portions generous. You get all you can eat . . . "with five kinds of pie," adds Dr. Conrad.

There are eight cabins, large and small for family use, in one area, and three in another space nearby. At Rainbow Lodge, named from the rainbow that lingers in the sunshine while spray rises from the tumultuous stream at its side, the rate is $25 per day, all-inclusive; or you can arrange for one of the housekeeping cabins at a special rate by the week.

As anywhere else, reservations for rooms or a cabin have to be made well in advance of your trip, for facilities are limited inasmuch as the tide of tourists has not flooded the region yet. However, with the site fast becoming popular as word gets around about the marvelous fishing and hunting to be had, the cabins or rooms are not long available during the height of the season.

Inquiries should be addressed to Rainbow Lodge, Chibougamau, C/o Boreal Airways, St. Felicien, Quebec. Mail is flown in to the airport at Chibougamau Townsite, and telegrams are flown in or relayed by radio.

It's advisable to bring your own outboard motor, although those of 2½ to 25 horsepower may be rented at Rainbow Lodge if not already taken. There are several handymen around who serve as "guides" at various times, but Joseph Mann ("Chibougamau Joe" as he is known to everyone) is especially qualified for guiding service.

Larry Wilson—prospector, miner, guide philosopher, and author, among other occupations—leased a large tract of land from the Quebec Province government years ago and settled down to mining, fishing, and hunting. He organized the Chibougamau Fish and Game Club from among his mining friends, and built the comfortable log cabins for his guests. As more sportsmen drifted in during the fishing season, he expanded the facilities and decided to cater in a moderate degree to these newcomers.

In the book he wrote, entitled "Chibougamau Venture", Wilson gives an absorbing account of his varied experiences in this immense, mysterious, ruggedly beautiful land of the North. He tells of the mining projects undertaken, and of other events that have happened in the past few years while this country has been developing.

Wilson says there are only two seasons at Chibougamau—summer and winter. "The freeze-up period starts suddenly, and usually lasts from the middle of November to Christmas," he writes, "when the lakes and rivers are completely frozen over and the ice is sufficiently thick to carry the weight of snowmobiles, motorized toboggans, and other vehicles of winter travel. It gets 40 to 50 degrees below zero, with the snow five feet deep."

As in other localities, when the best fishing occurs in June the black flies, mosquitoes, and deer flies are at their worst, depending, of course, on temperature and moisture conditions. It can be cold and rainy in July and August, but usually the black flies are not so bothersome in the period following June.

In fact, warm clothing and a warm sleeping bag are needed in the Chibougamau region even during the summer months. The Conrads found this to be so when they were there in July. Anent this situation and the fishing possibilities, let's have young Tudie (Sue) Conrad tell us in her own words, as set down in diary form, about some of the highlights of their trip. She writes as follows:

"July 3rd—No luck fishing Chibougamau Lake in the morning, for it was too cold. At 10 a.m. the water temperature was 58 degrees, the air 46 degrees. In the afternoon, my father caught two 5-pound lake trout, a big walleye, and three 3-pound northern pike. My mother and I caught some thrilling snags! My father got his fish on red-and-copper Dardevles.

"July 4th—Temperature 60 to 70 degrees. Mrs. McQuade, at Rainbow Lodge, said that weather originated here. It rains a little every day. The week we were there it was cold and we wore heavy clothes. The week before there was no wind, and the temperature was 100 degrees.

"I caught one nice walleye and three pike. My mother landed four sizable pike, and my father caught several pike. Our guide said the fish bite best in the middle of June.

"When we returned to the dock we brought six pike ranging from 4 to 14 pounds, and a pile of walleyes. Many fish are returned to the water, for we can't bring them home.

"July 5th—We caught around 20 good sized walleyes and four pike on Dardevles. My mother caught a big pike on a jointed Pike Minnow, and I had a strike on a rubber frog.

"July 6th—Cool and breezy. My father caught a 12-pound lake trout on a big Dardevle. Six lakers, from 5 to 15 pounds, were brought in.

"July 7th—We fished Lake Dore in the morning and played with some pike, returning them as we had enough for eating. In the afternoon we fished Chibougamau Lake and my mother and I each caught some nice lakers, and lost one. The lakers were small, 6½ to 7 pounds.

"We used small lures, a pearl wobbler and a Pfleuger Record spoon with a blue mullet finish. When we went to one of our guide's favorite spots, we would stay there until we used about every lure in the tackle box. For catching lakers, we used lead core lines and Ocean City reels, and for pike we cast or trolled with light Horrocks-Ibbotson tubular glass rods.

"July 8th—Cloudy, dreary, and rainy. My father played with 15 or 20 northern pike, all weighing around 10 or 12 pounds. My mother landed a 12-pound pike. I caught a small one, and we each boated about 20 walleyes. No lake trout.

"Rainbow Lodge is lovely. All the cabins are of peeled spruce that is lacquered to retain their color. Our housekeeping cabin looks out on some beautiful rapids which drain Lake Chibougamau. The food is 'heavenly' and plentiful."

One kink about fishing these lakes which Dr. Conrad discovered after experimenting is that, to secure the large, bottom roving walleyes, it is necessary to let a Dardevle or similar spoon settle to a low level, then bring it upward with fast, jerky movements. A slow or near-surface retrieve, after a cast, would appeal only to the smaller walleyes if any at all. But let your lure settle deep, then work it in fast, and you do business. A Red-Eye Wiggler or wobbler is usually as effective in these pike and walleye populated waters as a Dardevle or June Bug spinner. And a spoon lure with single hook is the most satisfactory for taking pike.

Being far back in the wilderness, the pace of life is slow and easy among the settlers at this outpost. "No one is in a hurry," says Dr. Conrad. "Up at Chibougamau, the day after tomorrow is time enough to do anything."

For this reason, then, it is an ideal place, to most anglers, for dropping anchor to catch a few big fish . . . and loaf . . . undisturbed by the cares of a bustling and troubled world.

* * *

Waconichi And Mistassini

A few miles to the northeast of Chibougamau Townsite, in a frontier land where no roads penetrate as yet, there

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sprawl Lakes Waconichi, 24 miles long, and Mistassini, 100 miles in length, both affording terrific fishing. Around these lakes, with the inclusion of Lake Albanel that is attached to Mistassini like a smaller Siamese twin, there is being created a new provincial park similar to the Chibougamau Reserve. The government is developing a sportsmen's resort by building log cabins and adding other facilities in preparation for the oncoming numbers of anglers and hunters that are expected within the next few seasons.

L. P. Gagnon, General Superintendent of Parks and Reserves for the Quebec Department of Game and Fisheries, points out that the only way to

Rainbow Lodge, with Lake Dore in the background.

reach Lakes Waconichi and Mistassini is either by canoe or airplane.

"Of course, the quickest way is by plane," he explains, "leaving either from the air bases at St. Felicien or Roberval a distance of about 160 air miles, or from the air base at Chibougamau, a distance of about 25 air miles.

"By canoe, the trip to Lake Waconichi represents about a day's traveling. The starting point is Lake Bourbeau. The traveler has to cross the lake and then through a chain of lakes and portages, reaches the south end of Lake Waconichi. This lake is 24 miles long and has to be crossed to the north end. From there, after going over two portages, Lake Mistassini is finally reached.

"The Trading Post and Indian village at Mistassini, where food can be secured, are still 20 miles away from the end of the portage. Due to the many portages and the very long stretches of open water, it is not advisable to undertake a canoe trip without guides. Unless one has some large canoes, which can stand rough waters, he may get windbound for a few days.

"As stated, the country is very wild and no villages or settlements or camps are encountered on the trip (note: save for the new cabins being built). Therefore, the traveler has to bring with him all his equipment, tent, kitchen utensils, blankets, canoes, etc.

"There will probably be some Indians camped at Lake Bourbeau, who could act as guides, but as they are rather unreliable, in this way that they can sini where the guides could take them to Waconichi, or have the sportsmen fly there where the guides would meet them. Both McQuade and MacLeod will have radio communications between St. Felicien, Chibougamau, and Lake Mistassini, through Boreal Airways Co. at St. Felicien."

From the experience gained by Walter Gross, who has been to this region on three occasions, we learn that the new peeled spruce log cabins are attractive, comfortable, and complete with modern conveniences. The main cabin at Lake Waconichi will accommodate 40 people in the dining room. Reservations can be made through L. P. Gagnon, Supt. of Parks and Reserves, Parliament Buildings, Quebec City.

There is a fishing license fee of $2.00 per day for Waconichi, according to Gross. A fellow can fly in to Waconichi from the air base near Chibougamau, in about 20 minutes, for the rate of $36. This sum is for the round trip or complete flight, and covers up to three persons and their duffle besides the pilot.

In company with Gordon Rockefeller, St. Johnsville, N. Y.; and John Jackowski, George Menge, Raymond Francisco, and Casmier Sikorski, of Amsterdam, Walter Gross made a very sucessful trip to Waconichi (meaning "Mountain of Fish Eggs" in the Indian language) this past July. They took their own tenting outfits, Johnson outboard motors, canvas fold-boats, and plenty of warm clothing for the cold summer weather. A 9 x 12 wall tent and an umbrella type tent provided their shelter. The equipment, including several extra cans of outboard motor fuel, was transported to Chibougamau in station-wagons, and then loaded aboard planes and flown to Waconichi where the resident caretaker, Russell Robinson, greeted the party. Cree and Montagnais Indians dwell in the district, and some of them serve as guides. From the air, Gross says, this is the most marvelous, beautiful country anyone can imagine.

Their fishing tackle included fairly stiff action solid glass trolling rods, with large sea reels holding 900 feet of 40-pound test solid Monel wire line. With this rig no sinkers were needed to reach bottom in 100 feet of water.

The right slant of the line when trolling was important, and this was gained not only by the size of the wire, but also mainly by the proper speed of the outboard motor. This speed was soon determined by experiment, and it meant all the difference in the world in results. The heavy lake trout were deep, and the smaller ones nearer the surface. One of the most killing lures was Eppinger's Huskie Devle.

Camped at the end of a big island in Waconichi, and with no black flies to bother them in the cold July air, the men set out in their foldboats to conquer some of the huge lakers that predominate in this lake.

Moving along the edge of a clay bank in 60 or 70 feet of water, it was not long before action came. At 9 o'clock in the evening on July 11, Gross received his first strike, and after a severe fight he brought to the boat a plump 26-pound laker. That's how it often happens when you're trolling in Waconichi—the big ones are ready to strike!

Gross says the lake trout are very deep, steel gray, with yellow fins and brightly mottled sides. They are magnificent specimens, thrilling in their sizes and the tremendous battles waged even against the wire line and stiff rod.

On one expedition Gross caught a 32 pounder while working along the deep bank, and on the very next trip past that same spot he pulled in a 30 pound laker. The first fish, 42 inches long, contained a 19-inch common whitefish with the tail sticking out of the laker's mouth.

That is the kind of fishing to make any man envious . . . and cause him to pack his toothbrush and tackle and head for Waconichi with no delay.

"The trout are so huge," claims Gross, "that a 20 pounder we took actually looked small. In only three fish we had 90 pounds of lake trout.

"On one expedition to Waconichi, the 13 largest lakers my friends and I landed came to 87 pounds. We have reeled in trout weighing 24, 26, 28, 32, and 35 pounds in succession.

"Once we ended up with four 24 pounders, six 28 pounders, and a 32 and 30 pound lake trout. A big scale, running up to 200 pounds, is used to weigh our strings of fish.

"I have the largest trout flown back to Chibougamau where they can be put in a freezer, and kept for us to bring home. The fish have been so big that the whole village has turned out to look at them.

"There are speckled brook trout weighing 4 and 5 pounds in the upper end of Waconichi and the tributary streams. There are some northern pike in the lake, but no walleyes. The big lakers are to be found in certain spots along the shore."

A few weeks ago I spent an evening at Walt Gross' home, inspecting the

(Continued on Page 41)

The average Black Hills whitetailed buck isn't up to this four-pointer (Western count) taken in the Limestone region.

BUCK or BULL for $35

By Bert Popowski

JOHN, the long-striding hurdler on his college track team, is comparably long-geared when it comes to touring Black Hills deer haunts. But he is sharp-eyed and keen-eared to boot, so his ridge-running is judiciously spotted throughout the hunting day, liberally interlaced with bits of sneaky stalking that turns up many a look at bucks, until he finds one that suits his fancy. Finally, he is enrolled in a Wildlife course. So his closet friends share his enthusiasm for long hard days in the open.

Last fall, lured by the record-busting South Dakota big game season, John and four of his cronies descended on my Black Hills cabin. There were sleeping bags and hunting gear scattered all over the place. The Coleman lamps sprang into light long before daylight and burned long after full dark. And the bottled-gas stove cooked flavor into many a husky breakfast, eaten on the fly, and as many leisurely evening dinners. Every night the sputter and crackle of the Heatilator-equipped fireplace was drowned out by the husky snoring of woods-worn hunters.

We were late in starting the November-long season; a whole week late. But a record crop of deer had forced the Game Commission to not only lengthen the season a full 10 days, but to permit the taking of deer of either sex. Before that bonus season was over some 30,000 hunters had bagged an estimated 40,000 deer on a two-deer-per hunter basis. There was a bonus option, too. Any hunter might substitute an elk for one of the deer called for by his license.

Non-resident hunters were on a par with residents in their hunting privileges. The only difference was that the visitors had to pay a $35 license fee, as compared to a $7.50 tab for South Dakotans.

There's a New Look to South Dakota big game hunting. Too many deer have forced the Game Commission to open record either-sex season.

Such liberalization of bag limits and season has been a growing need in the State for at least a dozen years. South Dakota's Black Hills deer have been growing scrawnier year by year, since as far back as 1939, when they first began to overreach the browse capacity of their range. Today's Black Hills bucks, because they regularly become runts during their fawn years, show a distressing decline in both weight of body and massiveness of headgear antlers.

The average 1½-year-old whitetailed buck, for instance, is 19 pounds lighter than his ancestors were in the late 1930s; and the mule-eared bucks, of the same age class, show an average decline of 26 pounds per animal. A 175-pound buck is now a rare treasure in Black Hills hunting when, 20 years ago, four-, five-, and six-pointers of that weight were relatively common and elicited no great wonderment among experienced hunters.

In comparison, the whitetailed and mule-eared bucks taken in more easterly regions in the State, where sufficient browse still exists, occasionally reach the astounding weight of 250 pounds. In some rare cases they top the 300-pound mark in live weight. So the answer to the runty deer now taken in the Black Hills region is simple: it is starvation for adequate browse, runting the Black Hills deer during their fawn years.

The somewhat doubtful elk bonus elicited considerable conversation as we

readied for our first dawn go. But I cooled that off in a hurry simply because getting the boys a chance at 10 tag-filling deer would necessarily take us into areas where elk would not be found.

"After a week of hunting, the elk are all back in the Parks," I pointed out. "There the Game Commission's butchers have been slaughtering them by the scores. If you want to take back any elk you'll have to buy the meat over the Custer State Park butcher's block."

Elk hunting never has thrived in South Dakota, and for a very sad reason. A handful of ranchers, some of whose crops are occasionally damaged by these over-sized deer, have had more influence in determining the South Dakota Game Commission's rulings than the tens of thousands of hunters who annually harvested down the scant elk surplus. Today, resident big-game hunters are on the warpath over that discrimination, especially since the Game Commission annually butchers many, many more Park elk than hunters find outside of so-called "game sanctuaries".

The actual figures for the 1953 hunting season showed that only 86 elk were taken by hunters. During the same fiscal year, beginning before the November hunting season and running clear into February of 1954, the Game Commission butchers took out 687 head of elk. The net result is that the backbone of elk hunting has been broken for years to come.

So we headed for the Limestone, that rugged outcrop of rocky ridges where deer are undisturbed throughout the summer. They stay there until winter's deep snows force them to migrate into the more salubrious climate of the valleys to the south, many of them migrating 20 miles to spend the winter's worst months.

Dale Jensen, one of John's closest college buddies, spied the first deer en-route. He slipped out of the car, through the ditch and up the slight embankment, while we continued on in an attention-diverting maneuver. But we hadn't traveled 150 yards before I heard Dale's .300 Savage slap out a single shot.

"As the old Indian said: 'One shot, one buck . . .'" commented John. "We'd better pick him up; we might need him today."

But we couldn't find a spot to turn around for better than a mile. By the time we got back to Dale's tracks through that snow-filled ditch he was standing above it, his fat doe shedding steam on the frosty air from the belly-slit through which he'd hastily stripped the innards.

"Didn't know it would be this easy," he observed. "Busted her neck while she goggled at the Jeep station-wagon growling down the road." He grinned a bit, then added: "Only nine more to go, and the day's a pup."

The day was, indeed, a pup, as we topped out on Big Hill, the highest point in the Limestone region. There are spots in that area where deer are thicker, but I doubt that any of them have the vast appeal of the finger-like ridges that run off the crest of Big Hill in two directions. You can stalk, drive, or melt the snow off stump or rock in that region. It is an area of perhaps two square miles that holds more diversified possibilities for varied deer hunting than any other I know intimately.

We took five minutes to draw a map on the crusty snow, using my numb forefinger for the job. The sun was just beginning to warm that high country, its rays glaring into our eyes as we decided to hunt into it. The dead-still air made it possible for us to work in any direction, though it also carried the crunch of snow to alert deer ears.

"Off to the east of Big Hill is a big plateau," I explained. "I call it The Hand, because it slightly resembles a mighty hand, with some of the fingers amputated, others deformed. The "finger" ridges all run toward the southeast, the heel of the hand is toward the north west. With six of us hunting we can alternately drive and stalk, and sit on stands."

"I'll stalk and drive," Dale and John spoke up, in one voice.

Les and Jim were only a split-second behind in announcing they were willing to sit on stands. "If we can walk far enough so we warm up," added Jim, busily swinging his arms in that post-dawn frigidity.

"Me, I'd just like to poke around, walking when I feel like it, and sitting when I find a good spot," suggested Ray. "I'm not so good in this mountain going."

That election brought a howl of laughter from the boys. "Ray's wife is going to have a baby almost any day," explained John. "The boys aren't sure but that Ray's suffering more of an ordeal than his wife is!"

I added two fine stands to the map of The Hand I'd sketched on the snow, indicating where Les and Jim would be most likely to have deer cross into the next valley ahead of John's and Dale's stalking. Then Ray and I took off along the heel of The Hand.

The whole maneuver was intended to get deer moving out of their post-dawn beds, when they would naturally circle back into the more thickly jackpined valleys. By alternating the drivers and the stump-sitters we could comb that area all day, merely moving deer from one spot to the next, through well-established passes they habitually traveled.

A magnificent seven-point bull elk. 30,000 elk-deer hunters killed over 40,000 South Dakota deer but only a meager 86 elk.

I sent Ray some 200 yards below me on our circle around the rounding heel of The Hand. To my right was a limestone ledge, generally too steep for deer to negotiate, except for two narrow passes. Ahead of us the rounded heel of The Hand curved into a 500-yard-wide saddle, an ideal place to intercept deer traveling both ways.

But we didn't get that far. Halfway along our route a doe rose out of her bed and flagged downhill, her tail wagging leisurely. I knelt to look under the jackpine branches and whistled at Ray. Some two minutes later his rifle slammed. I waited a minute more, then whistled again, asking information.

"I got one," he yelped. "At about 40 yards I shot her through the neck. What shall we do with her?"

"Coming down to help," I answered. We dressed out the doe, as clean a piece of eating meat as I've ever seen, then thong-tied her to a jackpine branch so only her heels touched the snow. "The road's about 300 yards below us," I explained. "When we're ready to leave you can follow your own tracks to her and drag her down for loading."

"Won't magpies get at her?" Ray asked.

"Not with her gut cavity toward the tree. They'll pick on the easier eating of the offal."

Two fast shots slammed beyond the rimrock. It sounded like Dale's deadly .300 auto. Another shot trailed it by several seconds, this whiplashing like John's .270.

"There's more meat for the pot," I surmised. "And the boys on the stands ought to sound off in a couple of minutes. We better get into the saddle at the end of this rimrock, to see what the boys push out."

We were both puffing hard from the sharp climb when two more shots lashed out, seconds apart, as if one hunter was making very sure of his game. Or perhaps deer had

come through both stands.

"You go on to that uprooted snag," I told Ray. "I'd wait for a buck for your second deer, but you do as you like."

Just then a doe appeared on the snowy skyline. Behind her, clinging as tight as a shadow, came her fawn. We sank to our knees and waited as they trotted leisurely past us, going right into the area we'd just quitted. For five minutes we waited, catching our breath while awaiting a buck to follow that pair.

"Better move over there, but keep a sharp lookout," I suggested. "I'll be on this side of the saddle, in plain sight of you."

I eased under a chunky jackpine well up on one side of the saddle. Its thick branches had reflected sunlight against the snow so dry pine needles carpeted a semi-circle at its base. Beyond were scattered jackpines, just the sort of cover a buck would slip through in easy relays.

John Popowski (left), accepts congratulations from his father for his bag of a four-point whitetailed buck.

Fifteen minutes later I caught motion some 200 yards away. Seconds later a buck walked cautiously into the shelter of the next pine, then paused for another survey ahead. I eased the safety off and waited, my eyes never leaving the buck.

He came on rapidly, in 15 to 25-yard laps, always pausing in some kind of shelter. At 125 yards my .300 Weatherby came up, but the scope danced a mad jig for yards around him. I slid my arm cautiously into the combination sling and carrying-strap and tried again. That was much better but still not good.

I suddenly realized I had the buck; the urge to point and shoot, regardless of the sight picture; the fear that game would vanish unless I got that shot. The buck just stood there, so nearly into the sun that he was a black silhouette. But my rifle continued its mad dance of tremors.

When I finally shot the buck lashed out with both hind feet in a startled kick. But there was no "whop" of bullet meeting flesh. He leaped out in three fast rocking bounds, then slowed to a walk. At that moment my tremors left me. Regardless of where he went, or how, I knew I could kill that buck. Swinging smoothly with his fast walk I touched off my second shot, holding low on the near shoulder as he angled toward me.

I didn't even hear that shot go off. But the buck lurched, then came on in a staggering run for a dozen yards before plowing the snow in his last diving lunge. I was so sure of that shot that I didn't even extract the empty brass until the curtain had fallen.

Ray came over and we made quick work of dressing out my kill. Then I threw a dragging thong over his antlers, broke off a short piece of pitch-filled branch for a hand-hold and tied it on, and shouldered my rifle.

"You stay here about 15 minutes at least," I suggested. "I'll drag him over near your doe—it's all down-hill and some of it quite steep—and then back-track to the car. When you want to come in just follow the top of this ridge; there's a sheer drop-off on your right, and rough timber trail on your left, so you can't get lost. And hunt the top of that ridge carefully for the boys must have pushed deer onto it."

I was just in time to share a coffee-break at the car. A doe and a light-beamed three-pointer were already cooling out in the snow. And John and Dale were yet to be heard from.

"We haven't seen them," said Jim. "But they were in that deep valley below us and probably dragged their deer down toward the road below."

"My doe walked right up to within 30 yards," Les spoke up, as I examined their kills. "When she stepped in behind a small jackpine I got my rifle up; when she came out I nearly cut her neck in two. Then, when the rest of the herd of seven came by I saw a forkhorn buck. But he stayed behind does and fawns all the way and I couldn't get a clean shot at him."

"Man, these woods are swarming with deer," added Jim. "My buck was in a bunch of five, all running tight together. But when they got to the peak of the ridge the buck stopped to let the does and fawns go ahead. And that was his last mistake," he concluded smugly.

We returned to the map in the snow and I pointed out a drive that would push deer at Ray or, if he was coming back to the station-wagon, would give all three of them good hunting. Happy with half of their tags filled the two set off immediately. Meanwhile I climbed aboard and slowly drove the far side of Big Hill, looking and listening for John and Dale.

I went clear to the bottom, then turned around and came back as slowly. Halfway up the slope I caught a flash of color in a power-line slash and put my binoculars on it. They showed me John, wigwagging his arms at me. So I hit the horn and drove up another 150 yards, where any drag would be chiefly downhill. Then, camera and rifle in hand, I went to meet him.

He had a nice four-point buck. He had, also, a wide and happy grin, in spite of the sweat streaming down his face.

"Boy, I've been wrestling this critter over down logs and slippery snow for a quarter-mile," seizing the sandwich and pint thermosful of coffee I dug out of my hunting coat pockets. "We jumped him halfway up the slope. So I stayed put and Dale made a big circle, and he came right out at me. At 50 yards he never knew what hit him."

"Where's Dale?"

"He's trailing another good one that won't run, just keeps sneaking from one thicket to the next. I ought to go up and bird-dog for him."

"Go ahead," I agreed. "I'll drag this one out of the road, load him on, and go back to where we started hunting this morning. If you kill one on top of the ridge, drag it in on the ridge; if on the slope, bring it out to this road. I'll wait with the car until one of you shows up."

I was just loading the buck into the station wagon, having made it in two trips to rid myself of every bit of gear before dragging out the buck, when a shot rapped out along the ridge top. Seconds later two more shots, so rapid they could only have come from Dale's automatic, cut loose. Then a long high yell, the howl of success anywhere, reached me.

Suddenly, I realized that we had more deer than we could haul back to my cabin in one load. Realized, too, that it was past high noon. If I had to make two trips from atop Big Hill to the cabin I'd better be starting the first of those. The main thing was to get most of the deer hung, so they'd cool out properly, then tie their legs together at knees and hocks so they'd pack well for the boys' return trip to the campus.

Ray was waiting hungrily as I drove up and, while he ate, I loaded two more deer in the station-wagon, after cutting off the legs at knees and hocks. And by that time we could

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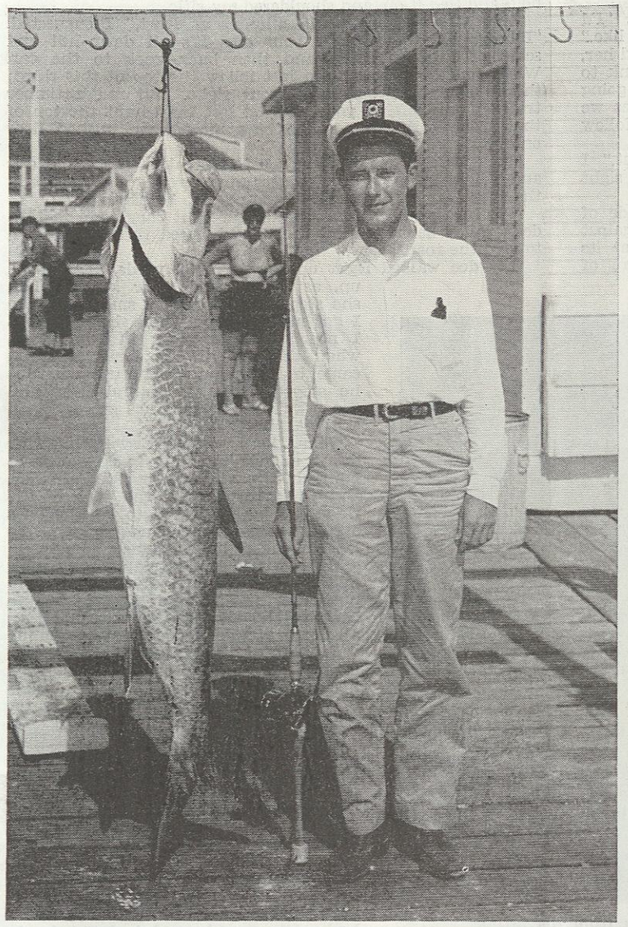

H. K. Webb of Dallas with his 5½ foot tarpon caught at Port Aransas during that town's annual deep-sea fishing rodeo.

Tarpon Baffle Me

By Russell Tinsley

THIS was my first experience in tarpon fishing. I was still slightly dubious about the whole situation. I'm a dyed-in-the-wool fresh water angler, and I'd shied away from salt water as if it were a contagious disease. Sure, I'd done a little fishing around the bayshore when I went to visit friends in Corpus Christi. All I ever caught there was some weakfish, croakers and an assortment of little stuff. It was Ed who convinced me I should try my hand at the large fish—the ones found way out in the Gulf of Mexico.

Ed was a salt water purist who had lived on the coast all his life. So it was natural that he and I frequently got into some heated arguments on the subject of fresh water versus salt water. One day, in particular, I remember the argument was occupying more of our time than usual. All because Ed had caught a nice tarpon the day before.

"Look," he explained, spreading his hands for emphasis. "When you hook a five-pound bass think of the thrill he creates when he comes up out of the water, shaking his whole body trying to throw your plug. Well, catching a big tarpon is just twenty times as much fun. And a heck've lot harder."

He couldn't convince me. I'd caught too many lunker bass to believe any fish could beat them for thrills. I kept my mouth shut and let Ed rave on. Then he came up with a proposition I couldn't wiggle out of.

"Okay, smart boy," he said. "I'll go with you fishing to your favorite lake, but in return you have to let me take you tarpon fishing. What do you say to that?"

I was caught. I couldn't do anything but accept. So we went to Buchanan Lake in Central Texas and fished for two days and two nights. Our catch amounted to five fish, and only one of them went over four pounds. They just weren't biting. Ed was still laughing at me when we boarded the charter boat at Port Aransas, Texas.

It was a hot and humid afternoon. I was still mentally kicking myself for getting caught in such a trap when the skipper of our boat fired up the twin motors and we headed out to sea, the boat rolling gently with the incoming waves and making me about half sick.

When we were about five miles out, Ed fixed up our baits. We were using mullet, which is about as good a live bait as you can use. Ed threaded the mullet through the lips so that the bait would swim forward, natural like and not backward. When he finished, he pitched out the bait overboard and the wake snatched them under.

Line slowly boiled off my reel as the bait trailed far behind the stern. When I figured it was far enough out, I tightened the star drag on my reel and the tip of my rod began vibrating as the bait skittered in the foamy wake.

These rigs we were using were awfully delicate, I thought, for a big, fighting fish like the tarpon. My rod was a five and a half foot solid glass affair equipped with a Pfleuger Rocket reel with 200 yards of 20-pound test nylon line. When I asked Ed about the rigs, he explained:

"You can use a bigger rig, if you prefer, but these lighter outfits give a much bigger thrill. However, if you ever hook onto a monster tarpon—one about a hundred and twenty pounds—then you'd better cut your line or prepare for an all night battle."

I was thinking seriously about his last statement as I watched the bait dancing close to Ed's in the wake. Tarpon fishing takes patience, and I was used to continually casting a plug. It was hard on the nerves.

Ed's bait was hopping from side to side. I was the first one to see the tarpon, an instant before he struck. His silver back broke water slightly and the tarpon lunged for the bait. A tarpon normally strikes down at the bait.

For an instant everything seemed to come to a dead halt. I watched Ed's muscles tense just a split second before the tarpon straightened out the line. Then Ed drove the hooks home and the limber rod arched over strongly and quivered like a whip.

"Tarpon on," Ed screamed and the skipper cut the engines. I retrieved fast.

The guide slipped the gaff behind the tarpon's gill cover and hoisted the sleek silver fish aboard.

The great lunging silver streak came out of the water, shaking his head savagely, rolling and tumbling back in a spray of tossing droplets.

Ed hit him hard while he was in the air, trying to keep the slack out of the line. That is where you most of the time lose your tarpon—on the jumps.

The big fish ripped off thirty or forty yards of line then came up again. His red gills glistened brightly in the sunlight as he walked across the calm Gulf on his tail and pancaked on the surface.

Ed's hooks held and the fish took off on another long run. Ed added tension to the line and the silver fish came up in another rolling leap. Every time a tarpon jumps your heart pushes up in your throat and you just know he's going to throw the hook. But when you're fishing with only 200 yards of 20-pound test line, then your only hope is for jumps. For one thing, a jump takes a lot of strength out of a tarpon, and for another, there's always the possibility the jump may make him change direction.

The fish was dashing now, parallel to the boat. Then suddenly he lost patience with the hooks in his mouth and leaped twice in rapid succession, trying to throw the bait.

At every jump, I wondered if that was going to be the last. But somehow Ed's line and hooks held. The fish was tiring now, and Ed was regaining some precious lost line. Things were looking up as the fish suddenly gave in and started moving meekly toward the boat.

When Ed had retrieved about seventy-five yards of line, the tarpon finally realized what was happening. With a quick burst of speed he took almost fifty yards of line. He broke water and shook. But his jump lacked the power and violent shaking the prior ones had.

Then we could see the tarpon's tail above water and we knew the end was near. When you see a tarpon's tail showing, then you know he's about through. When he rolls over on his side on the surface, then he is through; although you may still have about five minutes more work horsing him in.

Ed led the gallant fish in. There was no resistance. The guide thrust his gaff overboard, slipped the curved steel easily in behind the tarpon's gill cover, and hoisted the sleek fish up where I could gently slip the hooks out. Then he dropped him back and he hit the water with a splash, fanned his tail several times on the surface, then sank out of sight.

I was convinced. I was all thumbs as I attempted to get my line back in the water fast. But when you're trolling at random for tarpon, as we were, there is no hurry, I discovered later. Eight hours afterward I tallied up my catch—three kingfish (king mackerel to you), and a hooked bonito. But no tarpon. Ed hooked a couple more, but he too failed to boat another fish.

That was a year ago. And I still haven't caught my first tarpon. I've been out several more times, and I've hooked several of the big fish. But I still don't have a catch to my credit. But I'm still trying.

Until I do catch that first tarpon, I'll keep listening to what veteran tarpon fishermen and guides tell me. On every trip I've been on, someone has hooked and landed a tarpon. People tell me that's some sort of a record in itself. But I'm always the onlooker, and never the hero.

Tarpon fishermen tell me if I see tarpon and keep casting at them I'll eventually get some action. But I've found there's a lot to learn about battling the big waters. It's a lot different from river or lake fishing. Salt water will fool you.

Tarpon are not uncommon. That's not my trouble. You can catch them all along the coast of Texas and Mexico, and in the mouths of the bigger rivers such as the Rio Grande. The mouth of the Rio Grande is Hart Stilwell's, the famed outdoorsman and writer, favorite stomping grounds. He catches small tarpon, ones about three-feet long, there casting from the banks with artificial baits.

Me, I prefer trolling after the big ones, the six-footers and up, way out in the open Gulf.

The most popular rigs you see on these charter boats are what you might call light surf tackle. The rods are pretty long and heavy with big reels, strong line and steel leaders.

But, like Ed, I prefer the lighter tackle. I like the electric shock that runs up your arm when a big fish smacks the bait hard and almost jerks the rod free from your grasp.

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The first bunny jumped out at the edge of a white burley patch. My hasty shots only kicked up snow too far behind.

Back For Bunnies Again...

By Erwin A. Bauer

A SOFT snow fell in the night. It covered Kentucky's blue grass hills and drifted deep in the hollows, leaving a white landscape broken only by houses and fencerows and the skeletons of trees. Ours were the first car tracks, shortly after daybreak, to turn onto the Fleming County back road. Except for wisps of blue smoke from farm chimneys, there was no life on the land that late autumn morning.

The season was near its end but Charlie and I were after cottontails. Only the morning before I'd stepped off the plane from Korea and Charlie was waiting. Now just five days away from the rice paddies and the airstrip in Seoul, he pulled into a familiar narrow lane and parked.

"We're back again," he said simply. "Let's get going."

Outside the car, Charlie slipped into a hunting jacket and opened the trunk wide enough for a blur of brown and white to escape and take off in all directions at once. I've never seen a beagle so happy to go hunting.

"Meet Lulubelle," he said. "She was the puppy I bought when you went away."

It was a fleeting introduction for the sleek little female made a couple of fast passes around the car and disappeared into the bush. We followed.

We climbed a fence into a bare, white field where a crop of white burley had been chopped months before and now where rabbit tracks criss-crossed the fresh snow like lines on a road map. Then right near the edge, a bunny burst from a clump of grass and was well on the way down a hedge row before my gun came up automatically. Even allowing for a rusty performance after a two years' lay-off, the shot string scattered powdery snow much too far behind. Clean miss. My heart was pounding. At the same moment, Lulubelle opened up on another bunny going in another direction. It saved me making a long explanation to Charlie.

The cottontail bolted straight for the lane where the car was parked and followed it at full tilt for a hundred yards to the point it crosses a narrow ravine. Then thru a culvert and up the ravine until we saw it cross a ridge in the general direction of Tennessee. Far behind, Lulubelle followed with a steady soprano chop, and the chase moved out of hearing. It sounded strange at first—and then it sounded wonderful.

We climbed onto a small knoll to watch the show. For a time the snow muffled Lulubelle's report of its progress but eventually it turned our way again. Charlie saw the rabbit re-cross the ridge, saw it stop to listen, and then hop slowly into the ravine and out of sight again. The beagle kept coming steadily—but far behind. We were watching for her to come over the ridge when I caught a movement just below us. The gun came up faster this time and we were in business. I hurried down and picked up a plump cottontail that had been trying to slip past us under cover of the ravine below.

It was like old times again for sure.

We hunted across a long meadow where nothing was stirring and finally dropped down into a wide hollow divided by a clear stream gurgling under a film of ice. Both sides of the hollow were grown up in thickets of blackberry briers. From the edge of the nearest, Lulubelle pushed a startled cottontail and followed it by sight in a frantic chase.

The bunny cleared the brook easily, but Lulu broke through the ice on the far bank and the sight chase ended right there. The beagle made a couple of exploratory circles and then continued up the far bank behind a rabbit covering plenty of real estate.

It was a short run for, once on top of the hill, the cottontail cut back sharply and ducked into another clump of briers a short distance out of gun range. Lulu missed the sharp turn momentarily, but picked it up again and the quarry came hurtling toward us as fast as four legs would move. Charlie muffed a head-on shot but connected with the second barrel as the animal swerved. Two for the pot.

We didn't move from that hollow for the rest of the morning—even when a weak sun grew brighter and melted snow on the crests of ridges that stretched into the distance. The bunnies were really taking advantage of the blackberries' shelter and of six we flushed, four more were added to the bag.

There's a lesson there for rabbit hunters wherever they operate. Look for heavy cover, especially where it borders fields of grasses and legumes. It's a combination hard to beat. Fact is you'll never find many rabbits where these requirements do not exist.

Once cottontails were a nuisance, a menace to the first farmers who broke land along the frontiers. The new openings in the forest brought succulent vegetation rich in trace elements from the ground and many wild animals thrived like never before—or since. They multiplied, too, like only

Look for cottontails in grassy meadows that have been limed in recent months. Hunting is usually better in such places.

Lulu was the beagle bitch Charlie bought when I was recalled to service in Korea. She performed like a champion.

rabbits can, until farmers hunted them relentlessly the year around with every means they knew. Of course, that's all changed. Rabbits are still numerous in places like Missouri, Arkansas, Kentucky and other parts of the Midwest and South, but fortunately, sportsmen do most of the harvesting in legal open seasons.

On good land, cottontails begin nesting in the spring. The female prepares a shallow nest, usually in heavy grass, and lines it with fur from her own body. If she lives long enough, a single doe may produce several litters a year And here's another lesson for sportsmen interested in rabbit conservation: if it weren't for predators and certain environmental factors, rabbits would quickly produce fast enough to inherit the earth. But destroying predators alone is still no means to improve rabbit hunting. Any plot of ground, whether it's a covert in Kentucky or a surburban golf course, can support just so many rabbits. No more. If predators fail to get the surplus, something else—maybe disease or starvation—will. So look for rabbits where the environment seems best for them.

For a long time, sportsmen and conservationists have linked an abundance of groundhogs with good rabbit hunting. The groundhogs, it was pointed out, are wildlife landlords and they furnish safe dens for rabbits. Maybe so. But evidence is building up, especially on rabbit study areas in Ohio, that the dens only furnish refuge from hunters, not from many predators. So gunning actually suffers in some places where woodchucks are numerous. Chances are, therefore, that better rabbit hunting is possible by more ground-hog hunting in summer. Not a bad solution at that.

Hunt slowly along fence-rows and near patches of briers and heavy cover. Watch for the tell-tale eye of a bunny concealed in vegetation.

Hunting cottontails has a charm of its own under any circumstances. It's an opportunity to be afield in autumn when the land is bright and the air is intoxicating. It lacks the labor of pushing through heavy brush for grouse or deer and it hasn't the discomforts of waiting for flights of waterfowl in a raw freezing blind. You hunt as vigorously or as lazily as you choose rather than to cope with the game. But the sport has a particular fascination when light snow blankets the ground and the air is sharp. It's possible then, but rarely as rewarding, to hunt without a dog.

With snow, it becomes a matter of locating fresh tracks and then running them down to a source. This often is a bunny huddled in a camouflaged form or beneath an undercut stream bank. But no matter how often or where you find the game, the flush comes as a quickening surprise. You never feel bad if you miss the shot and you never feel better than when you make it.

If you've made the shot, there are other rewards for no wild meat is more delicious on the table, if it's given proper care in the field. That means removing the entrails on the spot—then finishing the job as soon as you have the opportunity. There's nothing wrong with carrying rabbits in a hunting coat, but for the best in flavor later on, as well as for easier skinning, carry them outside and hanging to your belt. After that it's hasenpfeffer, fried, baked, broiled or rabbit stew.

Rabbits frequent more open places when the weather is warm. You'll even walk them up in open places, in meadows, or in fields where crops have been harvested. Orchards are splendid places to explore: never pass them by. Cottontails will also visit fields of corn where the mechanical fingers of pickers leave kernels and occasional whole ears on the ground. A wise nimrod begins his hunting day investigating spots like these.

And here's an important item rarely if ever considered. Like all other animals, wild and domestic, they'll congregate on farmlands or sections of farms that are most fertile. Find out which plots the farmer limed and fertilized most recently, for there rabbit production will be higher and rabbits probably will be most numerous.

On the other hand, cottontails never thrive as well on run-down acres. They prefer un-grazed woodlots. And they prefer lands well managed to those that suffer from erosion and similar mis-use.

By noon we worked back to the car. While I assembled a fire, Charlie performed some of the familiar cooking magic I'd known on many a hunting and fishing trip with him before.

First he wrapped patties of ground beef and onions in packages of aluminum foil, seasoned them and placed them on the fire. Then after a hooker of applejack, product of these same Fleming County hills, plus a cut of longhorn, we savored the finest hamburgers ever made. Then a hard red apple apiece. It was perfect fortification for an afternoon's hunting.

We started across the burley patch again and found that opportunity sometimes knocks twice. From the same clump

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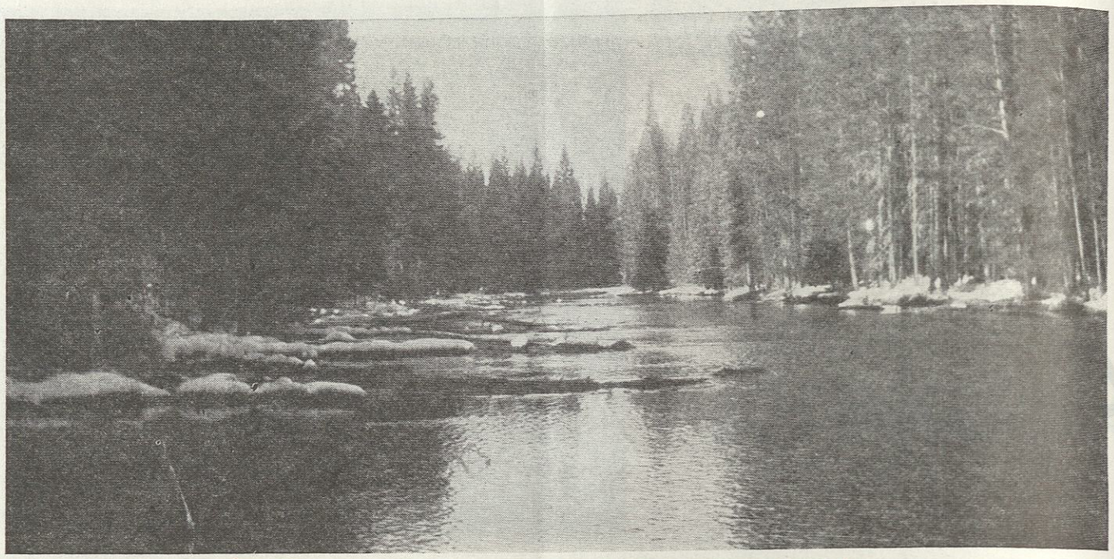

Cultus River, an excellent stream for mink. It never freezes over in winter.

Notes from a Trapper's Diary

By Wayne Negus

A FULL moon, hanging low in the eastern sky, brightly illuminated the snowy forest that surrounded my wilderness cabin situated at the end of a beautiful mountain lake, perched upon the rim of rock that fringed its shores. Although in the early part of the winter, heavy snows had fallen, and, as I gazed out the only window, the feeble beam from my coal oil lamp cast its rays on the snow that was piled even with the bottom window panes.

The day had been beautiful and cold enough to keep the snow dry for good snow shoe travel. I had covered a distance of seventeen miles from the 'line's end, and being rather tired, was about to turn in. A fire was crackling in the stove. My hearty evening meal had been eaten, the dishes washed and stacked in the orange crate cupboard. Rising from my chair, and striding to the door, I opened it to look upon the awe-inspiring sight that presented itself to me. The snow-covered hemlock and spruce were sparkling in the moonlight, while the snow at their feet appeared glistening white. The shadows in the thicket near the water hole seemed dark and sinister in comparison. A gnarled and twisted hemlock snag capped with tufts of snow stood out in bold relief. A feeling of loneliness akin to sorrow overcame me for a moment, but soon passed as I marvelled at this indescribable display of rugged beauty. My gaze turned to the lake which lay still and white, bathed in moonlight so bright that one could almost read a newspaper from its reflections on the white snow. The distance to the timber at the opposite end of the lake was very deceptive. Seemingly a very short ways, it was, in reality, one mile or more.

Reluctantly I turned and entered the snug cabin and closed the door. Taking down my diary from where it hung on the wall and sharpening the stub pencil with a skinning knife, I sat down by the table and made this entry:

Dec. 11.—By-passed half-way shelter as going was good and came on thru to cabin 2. Had 2 mt. weasels, 3 marten and 1 cross fox. Several squirrels of course. Could hear the trains whistle over 9 miles away. Hope this weather can hold. My 37th day without seeing a human soul. My dog died last nite. Poison I believe.

On reading this entry, memories of this day long past, are vividly brought to mind. Many of my old diaries have been lost or destroyed, for which I am truly sorry, as the years pass swiftly and nothing, in my estimation, is more thrilling than to relive these glorious days gone by.

One day while snowshoeing rapidly along the line tending and baiting sets, I approached a large meadow that ran parallel to the trail. My attention was attracted by two ravens which were flying from one large snag top to the oher, emitting their peculiar croaking sounds. A blue jay was scolding vigorously nearby and a group of camp robbers, gliding on silent wings, was moving from tree to tree. Something unusual was taking place, and these feathery denisons of the forest were telling me of it in no uncertain terms. It was near Thanksgiving time, but snow lay deep over this altitude plateau, forested with white pine, hemlock and spruce.

When I drew opposite this unusual commotion, I removed the heavy pack, standing it upright in the snow. Then grasping the old box camera, I cautiously advanced toward the meadow's end where this disturbance seemed to be located. The snow shoes made but little noise in the soft dry snow, and I carefully avoided scraping against the small heavily limbed spruce trees that grew in profusion at the edge of the meadow. Soon I saw something very black wriggling in a large hole which had been dug in the snow. I froze in my tracks and gazed at this unexpected sight. The black object was the rear end of a large bear that was tugging frantically at something on the bottom of the excavation. Suddenly averting my gaze beyond and to the left of this interesting sight, I saw a large dog coyote standing a short distance away, staring so intently at the bear's performance, I was not noticed. A coyote hide at that time represented a twenty dollar bill, so as quickly as possible I drew my .22 pistol from its holster; drawing a fine bead, I pulled the hair trigger.

The report of the shot reverberated sharply through the timber and up the mountain side, while the coyote shot in the head, sank to the snow in his death throes.

The bear's reaction was very comical to see. How any animal, apparently so clumsy, could back out of that pit so suddenly, was a marvel to witness. On top now, he tested the wind, which fortunately was in my favor. His head moved from side to side, small ears upright, as he tried vainly to see the cause of this intrusion. Although not more than thirty yards from me, his very poor eyesight prevented him from seeing me. Standing stock still by a small spruce, I watched with bated breath. Presently lowering his head, he went back into the pit, only to reappear at once. Knowing the .22 was not potent enough to kill the animal and not having any use for the hide or meat, I took a step forward from my vantage point. Then he spotted me and with a loud "woof", took off for parts unknown in a cloud of powdery snow.

I soon discovered what this fellow was up to. Standing at the pit's edge, I could plainly see the carcass of a large deer at the bottom, possibly wounded during hunting season and eventually wandering to the edge of the meadow to die.

Skinning the coyote and stuffing the pelt in my pack, I proceeded on over the 'line. I never did use the camera as the coyote had caused me to become side tracked from my intention of picture taking. This incident is clearly brought to mind by reading this concise entry in an old diary, dated over twenty years ago.

Nov. 25.—The storm is over so will dig out my 'line. On way to camp 1, saw a bear feeding on a deer carcass under 5 feet of snow. Shot a large dog coyote at the scene. Snowshoeing is excellent. Took 1 red fox, 2 marten.

One winter it was my misfortune to have a camp partially destroyed by fire, the one thing that every wilderness trapper fears and takes every precaution to avoid. After a gruelling day's run on webs or skis, during inclement weather conditions of high mountain country, it could be a tragedy. If one's camp were burned completely while absent, and on arrival find his food and shelter destroyed by fire, it would be possible to camp for the night if enough wood were obtainable. If not, the only alternative would be to mush on to the next shelter. Men have been known to perish from over-exertion and exposure while trying to gain the haven of a shelter after being burned out.

This particular fall, as I was preparing my intended marten lines for the coming season, I discovered, much to my chagrin, that I would be completely surrounded by other's 'lines. The marten had been trapped rather heavily in this territory, and the presence of two more trappers caused me to abandon this proposed 'line.

It was late in the fall by the time new 'lines had been prospected and, as no old cabins were available, my base camp was a hastily built tent shack. A sturdy dry lodge pole pine was selected and placed over the ridge of the tent. Working furiously, enough dry poles were cut and the small ends placed on the upper ridge pole, butts resting on the ground. This formed a protection for the tent, in expectation of the coming winter snows.

Time was of the essence now. Two more shelters were built by securing strong hand-hewn hemlock timbers at right angles to two trees that were conveniently spaced the proper distance apart, both on the shores of high mountain lakes. Scalped poles were then placed, butts on ground with the small ends resting on the timber that was spiked and wired approximately five and one-half feet from the ground. Dead spruce trees were then cut in required lengths and stood upright to form the wall for these crude over-night camps.

Rolls of tar paper, back-packed over steep mountain ridges, were then tacked on for roofing, so I could at least be sure of having a dry spot to sleep and prepare my frugal meals. A small air tight heater was put up in each shelter, the pipe being elbowed to extend out the front end. Poles hewn and placed upright then plugged all the entrance with the exception of a small space over which was fashioned a heavy tarp that served as the door.

These were not to my liking, but under the circumstances, would have to suffice. Dry wood was plentiful and I cut great quantities of this vital essential, stacking it in rows and covering it with slabs of fir bark that I had ripped off old snags. These were standing at a safe distance, so in the event they were blown down, they would not crash upon the shelters.

Much work was to be done, and by the time everything was in shape, over a week of the season had gone by before a trap could be set. Working long hours in a fresh deep snow that had fallen just as my camps were completed, the short winter days did not allot me much time to get the 'lines in working order. This was new territory—no old sets or blazes were in evidence, and the additional work called for blazing and cubby building that made progress exasperatingly slow.

At least ten miles separated the camps, and by dint of much labor, I finally had all my 'lines working. The first morning I left shelter number one that was hidden in a dense spruce thicket near a large spring by the lake's shore. Heading for shelter number two, snowshoe travel was excellent, and the powdery snow puffed from under my webs at every step. Marten were quite plentiful, and by the time number two shelter was reached, I had taken three very nice marten from the traps. Although it was a nice day, leaden clouds forming back of Cappy Mountain looked very threatening, and before I hit the sack that evening I looked outside only to see snow sifting down through the small hemlock trees that surrounded my snug retreat.

It warmed during the night, and when I headed for base tent camp, a mountain blizzard was in progress. My better judgment told me to stay put, but anticipation of what the traps might produce caused me to head down from the mountain heights for camp. Two male marten were hanging lifeless from traps that were set in hollow snags, and fastened solidly five feet above the present snow level. On the long ridge that extended toward the line's end and the tent, another was picked from a cubby set one mile further down the 'line.

The wind-driven snow was piling up in an alarming manner, making progress very slow. Two more marten were taken from cubby sets in hemlock trees before I finally came in sight of the tent which loomed grotesquely in the early winter's darkness. A fire was soon built in the old cook stove, warming the tent to an uncomfortable degree in a very short time. After a hearty meal, being exhausted, I crawled in the sleeping bag and was soon relaxing in peaceful slumber.

Extreme heat suddenly awakened me, and to my horror, I could see that the canvas of the tent was burning very briskly

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My dog, Panda, in a wilderness setting with the toboggan loaded for the line.

DANGER IN THE SUN

By Maurice H. Decker

Chapter XII—Scullduggery Doesn't Pay

ALTHOUGH Babs protested she couldn't eat a mouthful from being so upset over Lew's disappearance, she helped Charlie prepare a substantial meal and then voided the protests by eating her share. Afterwards Charlie dragged one of the boats up on land so it would form a back rest and they sat down against it to wait for morning.

It was probably the longest night either had ever lived. Charlie spent most of it in deep thought, trying to work out a feasible plan to rescue Lew from the Sculls but in spite of his concentration he always came up with exactly nothing. It all hinged he knew upon making contact with the Sculls and that was out of his hands because he didn't know where they were. On the other hand they were aware of his location so any initial effort had to come from them. And he devoutly hoped it would.

Several times in the night he heard sounds that seemed to originate with the Wheel's cruiser about a mile away. He didn't pay much attention to them because the Wheel had plenty of trouble now without sending his gang out for more. Charlie had wrecked the power plant of the ship so thoroughly it would be days, even weeks before it would run again and could therefore menace them no more.

Charlie insisted upon another hearty meal next morning and although he ate composedly and with visible relish, he found it just as hard to choke down the bacon, bread and coffee as did his companion.

"I shouldn't have come here," she suddenly declared. "I should have let that money rot in the sea. Everything is wrong. Nikky is dead, we don't know what has happened to Lew."

Charlie didn't have an answer to that so he said nothing. He was cleaning the sweat and water splashes from the guns brought back from the Wheel's cruiser.

"What are we going to do, just sit here all day?"

"I'll listen to any suggestions," he replied.

"I'm sorry. But doing nothing drives me mad."

"We aren't doing nothing," Charlie corrected. "We're waiting for something I believe will happen." After a pause he said eagerly, "listen. Isn't that the sound of oars?"

"Yes, I hear them too. Is Lew coming back?"

"Not Lew, some one who will lead us to him."

The morning sun was drying off last night's mist fast but shreds still shrouded the forward end of the island. A small boat emerged from the wraithe like curtain and standing well off shore, moved around until it lay even with them. The single occupant rested on his oars and called, "ahoy!" They couldn't mistake that high falsetto voice as belonging to anybody but a Scull.

"Ahoy yourself," Charlie replied.

"I want to talk," drifted over the water.

"Go ahead, we're listening."

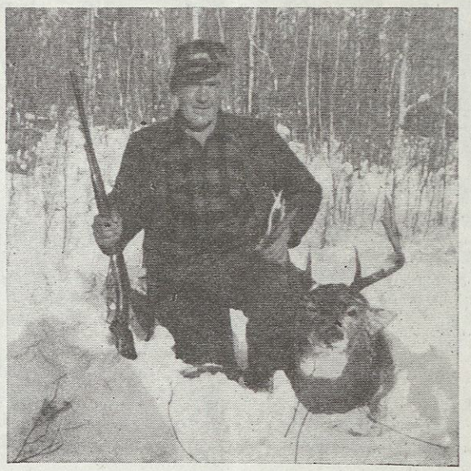
"I got to come in closer. But don't try any tricks. You start anything with me and you'll never see your partner again."

"All right," Charlie agreed. "Come on. But don't try any yourself, I'm a pretty fair shot with this rifle."

Scull moved up to about fifty feet. Charlie knew it was necessary because his squeaky voice didn't carry well.

"I want to make a deal," Scull began. Charlie merely nodded.

"We got your partner. He's all right—ain't hurt a bit so far. He'll be all right to if you're reasonable. All we want is that box her brother dropped overboard. We mean to get it too. If you'd been reasonable this wouldn't have happened. I asked you to keep it nice and cozy remember?"



Ted Eliason of Michigan with a fine buck.

Charlie took out a cigarette and lit it. He said, "Come to the point."

"Sure. There's nothing much to it. You tell us where the money is, we let your partner go."

"What about us?"

"We let all of you go. Nobody gets hurt. Everything is nice and cozy."

Charlie wasn't sold on the sincerity of the promise. But he had no choice. He remembered what a famous Civil War general once said about victory. It came according to the general by contacting the enemy and perpetually pushing him. There wasn't much pushing they could do now but they could keep in contact and he thought it was important enough to agree.

"You got a deal with one condition. Bring Lew here so I can see him. Then we'll take you to the money."

"That makes sense," Scull replied. "I'll have your partner brought right away." He picked up the oars and rowed back into the mist and around the end of the island.

"Are you going to trust him?" Babs demanded. "Don't you know he will murder us all as soon as the money is found?"

"I expect them to try," Charlie replied. Then his voice grew impatient. "Didn't I tell you that as long as they are miles away we're helpless? To get any place we much keep in contact with the Sculls and Lew, we got to be with them. Then there's a chance." He paused, "No, I didn't tell you. I just figured it out in my mind. Now I'm sorry."

"You think we have a chance?"

Charlie stood up and stretched his arms. "Remember the old cliche about when there's life there's hope? Well I feel very much alive today."

The mist had completely dissolved when they heard a motor ship approaching. It pushed out from behind the island and cruised up to within two hundred yards. "That's the boat that followed me down the coast," Babe declared.

The Scull craft was old, about thirty-five feet long with a short trunk cabin and a long fishing cockpit. It appeared dirty and poorly kept but the lines were good and the power plant sounded efficient.

Two figures appeared on deck, the first unmistably Lew. The second who carried a revolver and kept it pointed at Lew's back urged him to the rail. Lew waved a hand and called, "I'm all right." Then impelled by the gun he turned and walked towards the cockpit. Just as he started down the short stairs he called "Don't take any wooden nickels." A hard poke from his captor's gun send him down fast. Half a minute the cruiser crawled further offshore.

The second Scull was approaching in the rowboat. Babs said, "Lew must feel cheerful, or he wouldn't have tried that corney gag."

"He wasn't joking, he was warning me not to believe in any promise the Sculls make."

The second twin was close enough to talk. He said, "I told you he was all right didn't I? Everything is just like I said isn't it?"

"Right," Charlie replied. "What happens now? Do we come aboard with you to show you the course"

"No, can't risk that. You're too handy with your hands. We'll tie your boat on behind and tow you. But I got to have your guns first. I want every gun you have."

Charlie opened the packs, took out the sixshooters belonging to him and his twin, added the pistol taken from the Wheel's henchman and laid them beside the rifle. Scull came up gingerly, watching sharply with is sunken eyes. He gathered in the arms with evident relief and said, "Follow me."

Back at the cruiser he brought a tow line. "I'll take your stuff too. Thet will be safer if we speed up a bit."

It also eliminated any risk they had other guns coached among the equipment bundles, Charlie thought. He passed it all over to the other boat. He turned his pockets out too and had Babs do the same. The twin took the big knife he wore in his belt and then satisfied his victims were unarmed, went back to the bigger boat. Charlie thought there wasn't any use putting the matter off so before the man left he gave him the letter Babs received from her brother that showed where the marking buoys lay.

It didn't take long to sight these buoys because as Charlie suspected they had been close to the outer islands and to the open sea ever since yesterday noon. Both of the twins were on the cruiser, the tender used by one in his contact was tied to the forward deck. Charlie couldn't get a glimpse of Lew and supposed he was locked up below. That was going to make his rescue attempt more difficult.

The Scull boat cruised slowly, made a couple of swings and went over the water three times near the two buoys that marked shallow places. Then they stopped and dropped anchor. "Here it is if that letter is right," one called.

"The letter is right," Babs said shortly. It was the first time she had spoken since they left the island.

"Well, maybe," Scull was scowling down at them.

"You've found the place," Charlie said, "If you'll put Lew aboard we can be shoving off."

"Don't get itchy," Scull sneered. "We ain't got the money yet. And besides we want you to dive for it."

"Why me?"

"We got reasons." His voice began to grow angry.

Charlie looked into the bright green water. The bottom was no more than eight feet down, just an easy dive. "All right," he said. "When do I start?"

"What's the matter with now?"

Charlie took off his shirt, rolled his slacks knee high. He looked up at the cruiser, saw both Sculls leaning on the rail. Their faces were inflamed with eager greed. Charlie slid headfirst over the gunwale. Moving slowly just above the ocean floor he racked his brain for ideas that would turn this unexpected shift to their advantage. He had of course expected the Sculls to do their own diving. Then he remembered one had a broken arm which handicapped him both for swimming and for acting as a guard.

Charlie covered about thirty square feet of bed and came up to breathe. Clinging to the edge of the boat he pumped vast quantities of air into his lungs. One of them demanded, "You see anything?" The other twin snapped, "Shut up! Of course he didn't or he would have brought it up."

When he went down again Charlie worked on the other side of the boat. Surfacing for the third time he said, "Nothing here. Move on ahead."

One of the Sculls left the rail to hoist the anchor and start the engine. Charlie made several more dives in the new area without success. They moved ahead again. Once he swam near the cruiser wondering if he could climb the anchor chain and attack the twins. But he gave the idea up, it was too risky.

The Sculls were growing more angry and impatient. This was what Charlie wanted so when he came up the next time he dragged his body clumsily over the edge of the boat and flopped down on the floor. He sat up and rubbed his left leg.

"What's the matter now," one of the twins demanded.

"Cramp," Charlie said briefly. "I got to rest. If it don't get better I can't dive. One of you will have to do it."

"Fred Scull can't swim," Babs whispered. "I remember my brother telling me that."

"You're stallin'," one said savagely. He raised his revolver. "Get down there and hunt for that dough or I'll blast you."

Charlie attempted to stand, his leg apparently buckled and he fell over in the boat.

Samuel N. Haynes of New York. 76-years old and still an ardent hunter and trapper.

"Might as well blast him and have it over," he heard a twin mutter. That was the moment he almost gave up hope because from their viewpoint it was the most logical thing these desperate men could do.

But the other disagreed. "We got to get the stuff first," he replied. He didn't try to keep his voice low. "That letter may be doctored up and we need all of them handy until we finish."

Charlie chanced a suggestion. "If you don't want to go down, my partner can. He can take over until I get rid of this cramp."

They looked at each other calculatingly. Finally one said, "Well we ought to hurry this up and get it over before some boats come along." He left the rail and trudged below. When he reappeared he was herding Lew along with his gun. "Go over the side and dive for the box," he ordered. "You better find it to."

Charlie wasn't worrying about the box. In fact just before he came up with the pretended cramp he had sighted it behind a lump of coral. Lew climbed down the ladder, dropped in and started swimming towards the boat. A sharp hail brought him about. "Keep away from them," Scull ordered. "Go any closer and I'll shoot."

"I covered the left side of the boat," Chairle said. Lew doubled over and went under. He saw the box almost immediately. He knew Charlie had seen it too but was probably stalling for time because he hadn't brought it up. So Lew went to the top empty handed and rested with arms on the tow line while he breathed. He glanced at Charlie, caught a slight nod and went down. Then he came back with the slime covered box under one arm.

Watching the Sculls, Charlie saw them draw quick eager breaths and lip their lips greedily. "Bring it here," one cried. "move, can't you?" He looked at Babs. "That's it isn't it?"

She caught Charlie's frown and hedged. "It might be. But I can't tell this far away."

"You ain't going to get any closer, Baby," one replied.

Charlie said quietly, "Why don't you open it and be sure?"

"When we want your advice, we'll ask for it," the words were spit out angrily. But Charlie saw his suggestion was taking root in their minds and again they searched the other's face with suspicious, calculating glances.

Lew climbed up back on the ship. When he reached the deck a Scull jerked the box away. He was the one with two good arms and he still held te gun in one of them. The crippled twin went below, came back with hammer and screwdriver. He laid the box on the deck and began working on it. Lew leaned against the railing and gulped in fresh air.

A short squeaking cry from the hammer swinging twin made his brother whirl about. Lew thought that was a good time for him to dive over the side because the gun pointed away. But when he looked down Charlie raised a hand. Lew leaned farther over and waited.

Charlie snatched the short pistol he had taken from the Wheel's woman from under the middle seat where he concealed it early in the morning. It lay snugly on top of one of the ribbons and Charlie had stuck it there with a piece of tape from the first aid kit for added security. He found his balance and tossed the gun up, breathing a prayer he had judged the distance right and that Lew woudn't fumble.

The tiny pistol turned over several times and then plunked muzzle first into Lew's outstretched hand. His fingers seized it hard, he turned it over and slipped back the safety. He knew it was loaded, Charlie would attend to that.

When he whirled about both Sculls bent over the open box. The one with the gun held it down beside his leg. Lew knew exactly what he had to do. He didn't bother with any foolishness like yelling "stick 'em up!" Without hesitation he shot the armed man three times, aiming for the upper arm and shoulder. He didn't know how effective the short gun would prove so he didn't trust one bullet. The gun clattered on the

(Continued on Page 48)

FISH AND TACKLE

CONDUCTED by

BEN C. ROBINSON

Accuracy And Control Of The Bait Cast

By Ben C. Robinson

HOW often have remarkable game fish catches been made by bait casters who simply sat in the fishing boat and "bailed" out a random cast with their lure to some vague bit of water in the distance—to suddenly have their lure viciously snapped up by a chance finney denizen hidden completely from sight or from the angler's most far fetched expectations! All of us who do any amount of fishing have seen this incident actually happen; not on one occasion, perhaps, but on numerous fishing adventures.

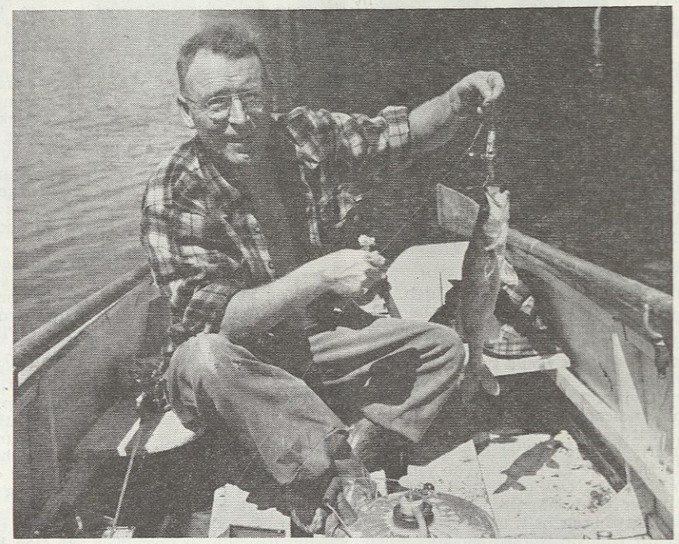
Sometimes, after witnessing one of these pure and simple freakish events where a novice angler, or one who is careless and unconcerned, contacts a fine game fish by pure accident and good fortune the audience to such a performance asks themselves the question:

"Is it absolutely necessary for a bait caster to be an accurate and skilled technician with the rod and reel to always place his lure where it will claim the attention and interests of a hidden game fish? Or is this a subject where blind casting is often just as effective as the highest degree of skill and mastery of the released plug, spoon or spinner lure?"

Generally speaking I think that accuracy and control of the lure when bait casting is just as important for the angler to master as it is for a star baseball pitcher or a tennis expert to know how to control their pitches or their stroke on diamond or court. There are times in all our fishing experiences when we have all encountered those lucky strikes from big fish, as well as smaller ones, when we were not expecting anything of the sort to eventuate. I have had it happen many times to me. But, as a rule, the best fish we snub on our casting lures are the ones that we actually play for and cast to!

I have had novice anglers ask me where accuracy in bait casting benefited anyone, for there was no real target often times for them to shoot their best timed and aimed casts at in pools that were large, clear of any clues to the whereabouts of a feeding or roving fish and why, therefore, should one worry about spotting the plug or the spoon at some pin-point objective? It was not like in pitching a baseball to a batsman. Then, there was some real target to aim for, some logical point to direct the offering to and some advantage that might be gained by extreme control and good aiming of the pitch. But in a wide and long expanse of lake fishing water where one was hoping for a fish to be found there was only water and more water everywhere around. A haphazard flip of the rod tip, a gambling shot with the lure was just as liable to meet with good results as one that was meticulously directed at a particular point of focus by the angler's eye—was that not so?

Well, to be a good bit caster there are very few places in any size or position of pool that do not offer some tangible clue toward which the lure might be directed or past which it can be intentionally retrieved after the cast has been regularly and accurately placed with a maximum degree of proper control. That is the badge of a successful and expert bait casting angler. He very seldom makes a cast that is not first figured out in his mind and passed upon with due consideration before the shot with his lure is ever made. Because of the fact that only a very amateurish angler fishes where there are no symptoms or signs that will lead him to believe there are fish to be expected there and that experienced bait casters spend their energies mainly where there are visible supports for them to believe there are fish in the vicinity where the fishing and casting is done I would say that the average good fisherman never casts purely on a chance of catching a game fish, but, that the primary motive back of each cast made is to place the lure where it will either catch the immediate attention of a hiding or a feeding fish or where it will be in a position of importance when the necessary return of the lure is attempted by the angler cranking his reel. These are points that call for the most superior displays of control over the rod, the reel, line and leader and lure itself. An expert fisherman has all these elements to weigh in the fleeting and instant moments when he arches the tip of the rod back for the cast and when the cast is actually directed for that invisible target that he alone is capable of determining clearly. It might be a mere wavering tenure of shadow that is to be seen barely in an instant as the sun slants down at a tricky angle, or an eddy that dimples the surface of the pool caused by some underwater elements that causes the current to deflect and become confused in its regular mode of movement, or that intimations of an underwater branch protruding from a submerged drift or a shadowy blur of a boulder that rests on the bottom of the pool or along its shelf or ridge



With practice, a plug, spoon hook or spinner can be made to seek the fish we are after, as in the case of this Winnipeg River walleyed pike caster, who used a jointed underwater artificial minnow to catch this small one.

—but to a good fisherman these are all targets of the utmost importance that bear the closest kind of interest and the shrewdest sort of gauging in making a properly timed and accurately placed cast. They are not stationary and customary targets at which the caster has had an opportunity to practice on hour after hour to get the proper range and gauge of, but fleeting bits of imagery often, sometimes so instable as to be nothing much more than a mere mirage against rippling screens of the breeze or wind swept lake or a twisting current's flow on a river creek or channel. So, if the angler expects to become a masterly bait caster he must learn to shoot the lure with instant and rapid focusing of mind and eye. Moreover there are other elements that have to be taken into consideration here. Perhaps it is a rise from some game fish or from some small forage bit of life that barely dimples the surface of the water, but that, in his rapid caluclations of mind and understanding, clearly represents a meaning that there is a feeding or moving game fish of whatever species he is pursuing there close around and that to cause it to strike his lure he must place his cast at some particular angle or position to give his offering all the best possible advantages.

So, accuracy in casting with the bait casting rod, reel and lure is quite important! And to be able to deliver such accuracy with an artificial lure attached to the terminal of a leader or a line an angler has to be really very proficient at spotting down his cast within the radius of a small diameter each time that something attracts his interest or catches his attention. Complete control of the medium he has with which to deliver this accuracy of lure has to be learned, and practiced at continually, when fishing and learning to cast an artificial lure. Otherwise, bait casting is not a skill, but merely a chance and largely a waste of time and effort, for in the long run the aimless bait caster gets nowhere with his fishing except to weary himself and to probably lose a considerable amount of expensive tackle, such as broken leaders, lines and lost lures from becoming fouled up on underwater snags and bits of vegetation or hidden rocks and boulders that lurk unseen under the current and eddy. The expertly trained and practiced angler on the other hand seldom ever loses any part of his tackle or a lure from snagging. Occasionally he slips and makes a mistake and his lure soars off on the wrong tangent from that which he intended it to take and he finds himself hung ridiculously high and dry up in some tree branch or snag that leans over the spot where the cast had been tentatively aimed. I think all of us have sometime in our fishing careers been ridiculed as "trying to catch fish up in trees" with our spoons, plugs and spinners.

But speaking factually, the practiced and well trained bait caster has control of things a large part of the time when he is on the lake or stream and very few inept casts land him in trouble with snags, overhanging tree branches, etc.

To gain accuracy and control with the bait casting rod and its equipment takes careful attention and preparation in the first place, then a vast amount of practice in casting to perfect the abilities to shoot a lure almost anyplace where the angler feels it will get the attention and study or aim of a pursuing or attacking fish. A strike in fishing just means that the angler's opponent has made a move to try to catch that darting or swimming lure out of the path it is traveling through the pool. If the lure is properly aimed and accurately propelled it will find fish that are hiding under logs and drifts and rocks and weeds that the incompetent caster will be both unable to cast to or fearful to even try casting to where logically the fish are lurking and watching for something to represent a natural bit of forage to come past. With practice and command of the equipment, a spoon hook or a plug or spinner can be made to seek for fish rather than to frighten them off as so often is the case when a reckless and unskilled caster begins to splash and beat things up around a promising bit of fish shelter or feeding areas.

Good equipment is, of course, the principal assets that the bait caster must provide himself with to gain this mastery over the lure he intends offering the lurking or feeding gamester. A rod that is true, accurately designed and built is essential. It must have enough spring in the tip section to control the lure and guide it on a course that is directed by the caster's eye and hand. But it must not have too much spring, for then there is the danger of it deflecting the lure no matter how well it has been aimed or directed. A rod with good action is one that springs the tip with steady directiveness, that does not waggle and vibrate and take cantankerous angles of reflex when it is flexed and sprung into casting release position by the angler's good right hand and wrist and forearm muscles. After considerable experience with these things the angler gains the understanding of how a suitable rod should respond when it is picked up and flexed into casting position.

The length of the rod does not mean too much. A short rod can be a satisfactory casting piece just as well as one that is long, providing it is properly constructed and its action trued up so that it is consistently sure and strong in the spring of tip and blade. I have had 4 foot rods that were true in their tip movements and their blade responses to the tip and they were excellent to cast an accurate lure with, while on the other hand I have had 5 foot and 5½ foot and 6 foot rods that were also stable and dependable in these movements of both tip and butt and middle sections. I have had the best success, though, with the well built tubular and the glued-up types of rods in accuracy casting at varying ranges on the water and the rod with plenty of action in tip and mid-upper sections seems to have produced better accuracy for me, personally, than those rods that are prone to be stiffish and vibrating in their stem action.

It is rather hard to prescribe a rod for the individual caster because of the fact that different anglers have different

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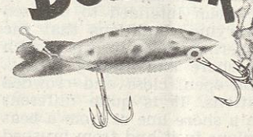

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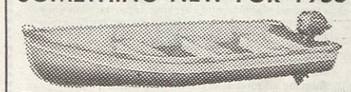

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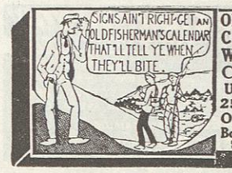

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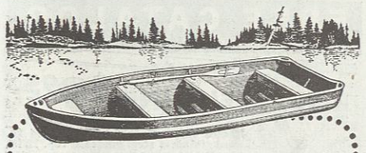

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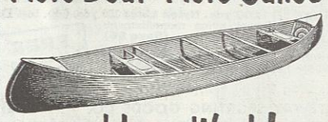

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muscle and wrist controls. Also there is a variance in coordinations I have observed, something that has to be considered. If I were to advise the beginner on what length rod to choose for bait casting practice I think I would unhesitatingly name the 5½ foot length of casting rod. With this rod one has a versatile range of casting styles and angles to choose from, such as the overhead, the side and underhand or flip casts, all of them intended to be used under the varying conditions that the practical fisherman has to work with in boat and shore and wading fishing, in open, semi-open, close and crowded casting positions. It is quite different casting from a shore line or from a boat with companions in it and from brushed over and tree lined and weedy shored stances than when casting from a prepared and open practice position. Fastness of lure placing is a considerable problem also in getting the jump sometimes on a feeding game fish that is glimpsed momentarily as it surges to the surface or makes its shadowy appearance someplace in the depths of the pool or about some underwater shelter or concealment. Most fish have a habit of feeding shrewdly and fast at some place and then moving off just as swiftly and stealthily, so that it is often to the angler's advantage to be able to flip a cast by turning the rod wrist so that the reel is in a direct under-the-rod position, with handle on the left of reel seat, and skimming a low centered cast out to intercept a moving shadow or surging movement at the surface a few yards off before it has darted out of range of the diving and shimmeying plug or the flashing flame of the moving spoon and its fly dressed hook. Other times the advantage is with an overhand cast, or possibly a short side swing of the rod to get that lure to the logical place in time to interest a feeding or passing gamester.

The good bait caster sees all these things that might easily escape the eye and attention of a mediocre and carelessly inclined fisherman. His technique has to be somewhat similar to that of a fast playing baseman or infielder on a crack ball team. Every shot of the lure has to be performed with a punchy quick smoothness that will get the offering to the spot where it is needed just as soon and as naturally as possible. This is accomplished by using proper bait casting tackle and well balanced and smooth, quick moving lures. Perhaps some anglers who have marvelled at especially successful bait casters and the manner in which they dart their lures here and there have fallen under the mistaken belief that these fellows are just exhibitionists and show-off fishermen, but they are not! They are astute fishermen, believing in the fast, quick presentation of the lure to the impressionable game fish before the potential victim moves out of striking range of their casts.

In some ways—in fact in many ways—fishing and especially bait and spinning casting is like hunting in thick, close coverts for fast moving and traveling game. Fast shooting is the only sure way of ever bagging the quarry, and that also means controlled and accurate shooting, and so it is, as I have found it, with bait casting—it is a sport that calls for swiftness of decisions and sharpness of the eye, combined with the necessary amount of tackle skill and deftness with the lure so as to catch these fleeting shadows, the almost imperceptible rises and all those bits of finney science, at the moment when they are in range of the angler's shots and also when they are in the position and incline when they will accept such offerings.

To perfect one's self on this deftness of casting it is important to be equipped with the best of rods, the smoothest and surest acting reels and lines and leaders that coordinate with these other major factors. This means that a bait casting outfit must be particularly well balanced up. The line must suited to the rod's action, the leader matched to the line, in proper length and size so as to balance its moves in retrieving the lure as well as in carrying it out and then the angler must learn to use his outfit with skill and speed. That makes bait casting an entirely new and different form of fishing than it is customarily judged to be practiced and places it in a class all by itself, I find. I have often wondered why it is that some of our most expert fishermen cling so faithfully to this style of recreation and diversion, but when one watches one of these veteran plug or spinner or spoon casters in real action on some promising bit of bass, pike or muskie water and witnesses their success in taking prize fish with their tackle then it is apparent why success attends them. They are really hunters seeking their finney game and they practice their skill much the same as other hunters with swift and sure accuracy of aim and plug or spoon shooting skill.

GENERAL PURPOSE FLY FISHING ROD

The one-rod fly fisherman needs a good general-purpose type of fly casting rod; one that works satisfactorily for everything in the fly fishing category. Is such a rod available, the beginner and the veteran angler interested in this type of tackle will ask? The answer is that, yes, there are a number of such rods being offered the angling customers. One of these general purpose fly casting rods that I have thoroughly tried out under a variety of sectional fishing conditions during the past season is the True Temper PENNANT, Tubular Glass Fiber Construction model that came out as a new feature to True Temper's long and redoubtable list of tubular steel and tubular glass fly rods in the early spring of 1953. This rod that has been personally tested and used by me is of 8 foot length. It is the two piece section type, with a natural gold lacquer finish and red and gold silk windings. The reel seat is of Tenite construction with a screw-locking reel fastening, shaped cork grip and stainless steel stripping (first guide on butt section) guide and tungsten guides and top. It is recommended that a size HCH level or a GBF torpedo taper be used with it, but this is not altogether necessary, for I found in my tests with it on trout, bass and panfish with flies, bait, bugs and spinners that an HDH tapered line worked extremely well. With an HDH tapered line of the soft, pliable, floating grades that are now obtainable in most all made lines, a 7½ foot or a 9 foot tapered nylon leader—depending on the conditions of the water, the openness of pools fished, etc, work ideally in connection with the various types of flies and panfish and bass bugs and baits used. I find that this rod will carry a surprising length of cast out using either the dry fly or the wet type fly and there is no question but what it is just what True Temper recommends it to be, a general-purpose fly casting rod! Rainbow trout and speckled trout were taken last season by me with the rod in fairly wide and open mountain streams where the dry fly I was using had to be worked far off from my position in the stream beds, and, at the same time, in other brushy and smaller streams I was able to do nice fishing with a short line, casting flies under close hedged in brush and overarching tree surroundings. I used this rod also for boat fishing in the northern lakes on large crappie, rock-bass, perch and bluegills, where they were schooling and feeding on insect hatches along the edges of windfall fringed bays and lily pad edges. This is a good test for any rod as there are times when these difficult edges try the construction and spirit of the best of the tackle. I was able to work my flies for results and had a marvelous series of these panfish with perfect killing evening fly fishing enjoyments. I also tested the rod out on largemouth bass in river and bay fishing, using dry flies and found that the rod could be depended on to work a long, accurate line to reach certain difficult places where the fish were lurking in treacherous surface sheltered cover. These facts assure me that the Pennant No. 615 is a grand fly rod for all-round fly, bug, spinner and spoon casting for everything from trout to salmon.

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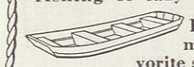

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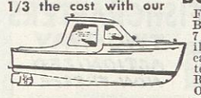

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Rainbows But No Stetson

By Carlos Vinson

"RAT" NEWBY bet me a new Stetson hat that he could catch more and bigger rainbow trout on artificials than I could on natural baits. That was over a year ago, and neither of us as yet has a new Stetson.

We limited our bet to flyrod fishing and the lures and baits that flyrodders normally use for trout. Operations were limited to two creeks not far from our homes in Central Tennessee, Mountain Creek and Charles Creek, and nothing counted from trips where we did not go astream together.

Normally I am more of an artificial bait fan than "Rat" is, but I have long argued that more small stream trout can be taken on worms, grasshoppers, crickets and so on than can be taken on flies and spinners and the like. I say this for two reasons.

First, the overhanging brush along most of our smaller trout streams prevents the proper handling of artificials, especially dry flies, and in my way of thinking this means plenty. In other words, because of the narrowness of the streams and overlapping bank brush, proper rod action for laying the lures down properly is all but impossible in all too many places along such streams. There's always the possibility of floating the lures in the currents, but in most small streams here again we often run into difficulties.

A sample of the Charles Creek rainbows.

My second reason is simply this. I have never been able to catch very many rainbow trout that I could see when the water was crystal clear. When the streams are low and the water is clear, it is only natural for trout to hang out in the deeper pools, and usually where there's something near for them to hide under. In other words, a rock shelf, drift, bank stump or tree, or maybe even a stretch of overhanging bank. It is true that artificials can be drifted back under such hiding nooks same as natural baits, but the big question is, will rainbows take them as good when the water is clear? I say not. "Rat" says they will, even better. My reasoning is, a redworm or small grasshopper on a small hook tied on to a fine three pound nylon leader, with maybe a very small split shot on the leader to carry the bait down and back under right, is bonafied rainbow food and offered in a natural manner, the fish can't see the fisherman or visa versa, and to me, from the fish's viewpoint, that makes more sense than an artificial offered in the same manner, especially in clear water. It is a well known fact among trout fishermen that rainbows especially like redworms and small brown field grasshoppers, and I've yet to see the imitation of either that really looked like the real thing.

Our first trip with the new Stetson at stake was to Mountain Creek while the stream was slightly up following a spring shower. The water was what I call milky dingy. Neither Mountain or Charles Creeks are noted for tackle busting prize winning rainbows, but a few in the four pound class have been taken from the streams, and two pounders are not too uncommon. The usual size average plays between three-quarters of a pound and a pound and a half per fish. Nothing to write home about I assure you, but I've seen swarms of fishermen go simply nuts over trout not over half as large. Anyway, it is doggone good sport fishing for them, and they make excellent skillet fodder.

All I carried along on this trip was a can of redworms ("Rat" calls them "Garden Hackle") and a jar of salmon eggs. "Rat" had with him only artificials in accordance with our agreement.

I knew that the rainbows would be scattered out in the dingy water, so I planned my strategy accordingly. Friend "Rat" did likewise. I baited up with worms and started letting my bait drift with the currents. In other words, the deeper stretches of fairly fast rapids, and letting my bait drift on down into

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the deeper pools. The split-shot I used on my leader was not heavy enough to carry the bait to the bottom in the medium fast rapids, but of sufficient weight to hold the bait down to the proper depth. On the bottom, I've never been able to take very many rainbows with worms or other natural baits, and the same goes for such baits fished too shallow, but at the right depth worms and small grasshoppers and sometimes even salmon eggs are rainbow killers.

"Rat" very carefully tied on a small spinner-fly and started fishing much in the same manner I was fishing my "Garden Hackle". The main difference was, he would stand at the head of a stretch of rapids and slowly let out line while his lure drifted downcurrent, and when he had out the desired amount of line he would start slowly retrieving line with one hand and giving his rod-tip easy jerks with the other. It is an excellent system for dingy water rainbow fishing, there's no doubt about that. The strikes, however, at least eight times out of ten, will occur after the jerky retrieve starts, whereas they'll usually smack the worm bait as it drifts downcurrent. "Rat" had on his regular wading boots, while I only wore short boots. I didn't figure that my worm fishing would take me into water deep enough to make waddling around in heavy boots all day necessary. One fish satchel was all we carried, and no landing net. A lot of extra gear is really a bother while fishing small brushy banked streams. The less one has hanging from him to get caught up in the brush the better.

"Rat" was first to score. He latched on to a dazzling pound and a half specimen that did everything short of a backward triple somersault before my buddy finally whipped the zip out of him. And the way that rainbow smacked "Rat's" spinner-fly, well, I started thinking to myself that maybe I was going to be out the price of a new Stetson hat. We'd made it a Royal Stetson, too.

Less than ten minutes later another one that later weighed a couple of ounces over a pound tied into "Rat's" small and very light spinner-fly like a hound dog biting at the rump of a coon. There was a smirky expression on my friend's face as he held that one up so I could snap a picture, but he didn't say anything. Good thing he didn't, too.

Right away after that those Mountain Creek rainbows started hitting my current moved "Garden Hackle" like they had just freshly declared war on all redworms. To make a long story short, I satcheled five before friend "Rat" got another strike, and they ranged from three-fourths of a pound to a pound and a quarter per fish. I even hooked and landed three additional smaller specimens which I immediately released before "Rat" got another strike. I had him take some pictures of me, too, and my face probably carried that smirky "big feeling" expression, but I knew better than to say anything. I learned long ago that digs at times like that usually always backfire before the day is done.

Seven trout per day is our Tennessee creel limit, and we had agreed that we would quit for the day when the first limit was creeled, or, in our case, satcheled. Released fish didn't count one way or the other, and we agreed to release everything under one half pound.

After my fifth keeper rainbow "Rat's" spinner-fly started paying off again, and before I got another strike he had hooked and landed a couple more dandies weighing better than a pound each. He would take one rapid stretch and I would move on to the next, and usually we were fishing within sight of each other.

Finally I latched on to another one as my bait drifted slowly down through an easy flowing stretch, and this one put on the prize show of the day. He broke water exactly twelve times before I finally played him into submission.

Before I could get baited up again "Rat" tied into another beauty that also put on an excellent show. The race was getting hotter and hotter by the minute. There was excitement galore. I was confident that "Rat" had me beat in size, so I knew that my only chance of keeping from buying a new Stetson was to get my limit of seven before he did.

My feathers fell a few minutes later, but only temporarily. "Rat" latched on to one all right, but during its second dazzling leap the glistening rainbow spit friend "Rat's" lure against the water's surface in truly expert fashion. Lost fish didn't count, so I felt the goose pimples disappearing from the back of my neck as "Rat" fumbled with a limp line.

Ten minutes or so later one smacked my bait and hard, and right away what I hoped to be the deciding battle of the day was on. I played the fancy fighting rainbow very carefully, and when I finally brought him in thoroughly whipped I could fairly feel a brand new Royal Stetson sitting gracefully on my dome. The scales, however, deadlocked everything. "Rat's" largest rainbow weighed a full two ounces more than my creel completing catch, so he led in size and me in number. Naturally, there was nothing left to do but declare it a draw and set another day to finish things up as far as the new Stetson was concerned.

Two weeks from that day we fished Charles Creek with the new Stetson at stake once more. That's getting a bit ahead of the story, however, so suppose I tell the story in its proper sequence.

During that two weeks period both "Rat" and me went trout fishing, but not together. I hit Charles Creek late one afternoon while the water was clear, but there was a fairly stout wind blowing which kept the water's surface rippled in most places. Neither worms, grasshoppers, crickets, or salmon eggs would pay off. For some reason the rainbows were just not interested in such baits that afternoon, not even slightly. I didn't even as much as get a bump on them, let alone a solid strike.

I noticed that the rainbows were feeding on something on the surface, so I decided to see what I could do with dry flies, very small ones. Very quickly I changed reels so I would have a more suitable line for dry fly fishing, and because of both the wind and overhanging brush I knew that it would be more a matter of drifting than casting.

To make a long story short, my strategy paid off. In less than an hour I took four dandy rainbows (the smallest lacked only two ounces weighing a pound), and all on the dry flies that I let drift in slow current over likely looking spots. This was an off-the-record trip as far as "Rat's" and my Stetson wager was concerned, so I was perfectly in line in having the artificials and extra reel along.

A couple of days later "Rat" came by my house just after dark and very proudly showed me five nice rainbows which he had taken from Mountain Creek late that afternoon. There had been a shower, and I knew that the water must be dingy.

"How'd you get them?", I asked. He hesitated in his reply, but the truth finally came out. "On redworms and black crickets", he said, with an obvious degree of reluctance. Then I told him about my Charles Creek experience a couple of days previous.

Then came our second trip with the new Stetson at stake. Charles Creek looked very inviting that day, and the water was clear. There was a gentle breeze blowing out of the south.

"Rat" started drifting wet flies right away, and even casting them in places where there were no brush to hinder his casts, and again I started in with "Garden Hackle". Neither of us scored during the first hour's fishing. I did get a couple of fairly hard bumps, but no real strikes. "Rat" changed flies several times, and finally I switched from redworms to grasshoppers, and then to salmon eggs.

Finally "Rat" hit on the right number among his collection of wet flies, and before I could fully realize what was happening he had hooked and landed two rainbows in the one pound range. "This will never do", I thought to myself, but I only had one more variety of natural bait to try. On the way to the creek I had stopped long enough to get ten catalpa worms from a catalpa bush in a neighbor's yard, and these I had carefully placed in a plastic bait box. A small supply indeed, but after everything else had failed for me they were certainly worth a try.

Yep, you've probably guessed the truth by now, my catalpa worms paid off. Before friend "Rat" got another strike on his wet flies I had hooked and landed three pound size rainbows on the catalpa worms.

Then "Rat" started scoring again, and he had a total of six in his satchel before I again saw action. His largest specimen, however, weighed slightly less than a pound and a half. Then it happened.

I let a juicy catalpa worm drift back under an overhanging bank stump, a part of which extended out over a rather deep swirly pool, and the instant my bait was swirled back under the stump the explosion occurred. From the way that smashing strike felt, I'd have sworn that nothing less than a four pound fish was capable of such. And I'll never forget the thrilling fight that followed. "Rat" saw it all, and I wasn't at all sure that my three pound leader would prove sufficient if I was to keep the old boy out from under the overhanging rooty bank. I finally whipped him down to a frazzle, however, and he tipped the scales (the small fisherman's scales that we carried along) at two and one-fourth pounds.

"Let's quit for the day and call off this dadgum wacky hat bet of ours", suggested "Rat", as he readied my camera to snap a picture of me and my prize catch. And that's exactly what we did, and we were both convinced that the thing we were betting on is something that will probably never be settled to the satisfaction of all concerned.

There's times and places when one system will work better than the other and vice versa but, shh, don't tell "Rat" I said this, I really believe there's more times when natural baits will pay off in small stream fishing than will artificials. Fish the artificials in practically the same manner you would the naturals and maybe no, but how many trout fishermen will do that? "Rat and I are neither experts nor purists. We are just plain run-of-the-mill fishermen that do not go in for the more sophisticated angles of angling like catching a lot of fish and turning them all loose. We like to take a little skillet fodder home with us from our trips astream, and we are certainly not above lowering our standards to some of the more unorthodox methods if it takes such to catch fish. Neither of us had to buy the other a new Stetson hat, but we did learn considerable that we did not already know about trout fishing, and the whole affair supplied us with plenty of thrills. "Rat" just left my place about an hour ago. He came by to show me several trout flies that he had tied himself. And before he left I just couldn't resist taking him out to my garage and showing him a whole batch of nice big juicy redworms that I dug up behind my cow barn only yesterday.

Sails Rate High

By Russell Tinsley

THERE is a great game fish down in the Gulf of Mexico that I'm all enthusiastic about. Scientifically he's called the Istiophorus americanus, but if you mentioned that name to the run-of-the-mill anglers on the Texas coast, they'd look at you as if you were cracking up. All they know him by is the moniker sailfish. That name speaks for itself.

Sailfish are beginning to steal the tarpon's thunder and the once popular king mackerel is finding itself taking a back seat to this battling fish with the long beak and the high dorsal fin. A few years back Texas anglers discovered they had a pretty fair concentration of sails in their waters, and ever since the popularity of this fish has been gaining in leaps and bounds. Not as big a concentration as is found in the Gulf Stream or around Florida, understand, but enough to make the sport highly interesting.

Why has the sailfish become so popular while the more abundant tarpon, king mackerel and the such are lying around in gobs and just begging to be caught. Because the sailfish is different, that's why. There is no other fish today, except maybe the marlin, that you must fish so exclusively for. Contrary to what a lot of people would have you believe, you just don't catch sails unless you are out for sailfish and nothing else. I don't mean to imply, however, that you won't get a sailfish to strike while fishing for other salt-water game fish. That

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is just the antithesis of the truth. Sure, an angler trying for tarpon or ling or mackerel may get countless sailfish strikes without being aware of it. But only on the very rarest of occasions is one going to be caught. A sailfish has an annoying habit of mouthing a bait before deciding to swallow it. Show me a sailfish crazy enough to mouth a wooden plug and then decide to swallow it. Or trying to mouth and swallow the bait while the boat is zipping along at a six to eight knots pace. Then I will believe it. Only then.

Fishing for sails is work. You have to put everything you've got into the task and the fishing calls for utmost concentration. But after you've hooked one of the elusive specimens, you're repaid a thousand times for your efforts. If you have an inherent weakness for fish that jump, as I do, then the sailfish is for you. No other fish in the Gulf can match his aerial tactics. The sailfish will leap and run and leap. And just about the time when you think you've got him whipped, he'll jump again. If you don't watch out, he'll throw you're hook right back at you. That's the usual procedure.

Let me explain further how you take this fish. While some sails have been caught on feathered lures; that practice is tabooed down in my bailiwick. Natural bait is the secret, and guides won't even consider anything else. Small mullet and ballyhoo are the more popular baits with mullet being the favorite with most anglers.

Usually these baits are threaded where you will have a hook in the tail and are suspended from outriggers and trolled. Trolling is the secret for sailfish, and chances are you probably will never hear of one being caught by any other method. Big wooden plugs with no hooks, called teasers, are also trolled right along with the bait. These teasers are supposed to be the thing that lures the sailfish. They gurgle along on the surface and raise a big ruckus. I've never seen a sailfish strike at one, or for that part, I've never seen one make a pass at one of the wooden artificials. But guides swear that teasers are a must for successful sailfishing, and who am I to argue?

The natural bait is trolled along on the surface, out beside the wake, skipping from wave to wave. You don't troll a sailfish bait below the surface. There are several reasons for such a practice. First, a sailfish has a tendency to strike a bait more readily if it is offered on the surface. Secondly, the fisherman must be able to glimpse the sail before it strikes where the pilot can cut the engines and give the sail time to mouth and swallow the bait.

There is something about the way a sailfish approaches the bait that sends your heart crawling up into your throat. The long fish will surface some ten yards behind the bait and will glide up to the bait cautiously, his big, rigid dorsal fin slicing through the water. A sail many times will whack the bait with his beak and examine it thoroughly before mouthing it and gobbling it down. And as often as not, he will nonchalantly turn and ignore the bait and will sink out of sight, leaving you all tense and shaking in your shoes.

If he does take the bait, it pays not to be too quick on the trigger. A sailfisherman has to have patience. The fish must have ample time to mouth the bait and swallow it. Then you hit him with everything you've got. Not just once, either. You keep driving the hooks home with tremendous heaves of the rod until the razor-sharp point penetrates the tough gristle of the sailfish's mouth. That is why heavy tackle is a must. The standard rig is a long, surf-type bamboo rod, rod harness, a 9/0 reel, twelve-thread line and a No. 10 hook. Also, a metal leader is a necessity. A gut or nylon leader will last about as long as a cellophane cat in hell. One swipe of the bill and a sailfish will cut it in two.

And even after all that work, the sailfish usually spits the bait right back at you on the first jump. Rarely does an angler hold a sail for two jumps or more. But if he can be kept on for as many as five jumps, then usually he's as good as in the bag. But not always, that's for sure.

I have seen fellows who try to take sails on light tackle, but that's just not a practical proposition. While a sail does offer much more sport on the lighter, more whippy rods and lighter line, the hook just can't be set properly with such a rig. Also, with light tackle, an angler can't control a sailfish on the jumps. And that's where a great majority of the sailfish are lost—on the jumps.

As it is, the mortality rate of hooked fish is high, even with heavy tackle. The average is about one sailfish caught out of every ten hooked. And an angler is extremely lucky if he hooks one fish out of every ten strikes. They are an elusive fish, all right, these aerial artists of the Gulf waters.

And after you catch one of the coveted prizes, you have every reason to be proud of your beautiful trophy. Long and sleek, the average sized sail is over seven feet in length, colored a deep bluish-green, tinted on the underside with white and with the tall, long dorsal fin.

While they aren't the most pliable fish in the Gulf, they are still edible and many people consider them a delicacy. For that reason the sailfish has a sizable advantage over the tarpon which is strickly a sporting fish and not fit for the dinner table.

So if you go after this wonderful fish in earnest, you will never regret your decision. For the sailfish is truly a great fish—not a victim of ballyhoo as is the case with the stud jack. A dolphin can make your stomach push up against your lungs with his crazed leaps. A tarpon has his own peculiar style of fighting which in itself ranks at the top of the salt-water fisherman's list. A king mackerel can dazzle you with his blinding speed.

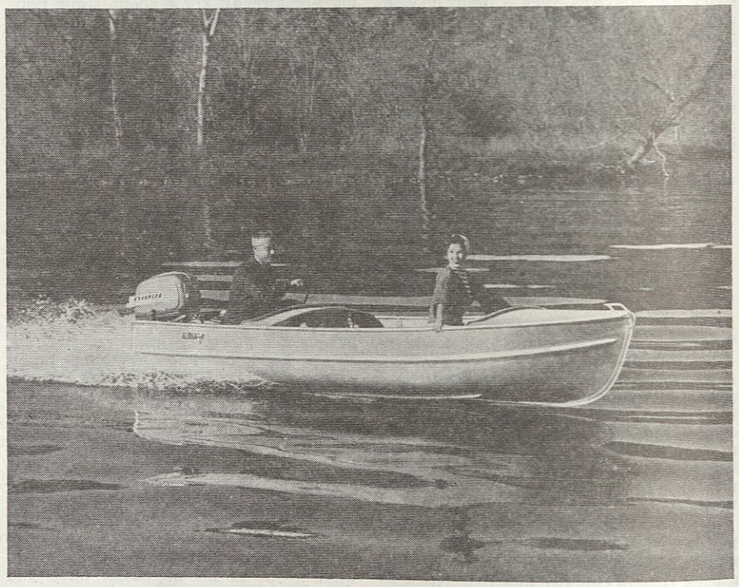
But none can match the sailfish for all around thrills. He is in a class by himself!

Aluma Craft Announces 4 New Models

FOUR new Aluma Craft models; a 15 foot canoe, two new runabouts, and a deeper, stronger 14 foot outboard model for large, rough water use have been added to the Aluma Craft line for 1955.

The 15 foot canoe, Model C-15, weighing only 77 lbs., has a midship beam of over three feet and Erich Swenson, the designer, has carried the fullness forward and aft giving this 15 footer approximately the same carrying capacity and stability of most 17 foot canoes,

The 14 foot Model FD has a depth amidship of 21", making it deeper than any other 14 foot outboard in the line.



The new Aluma Craft Model FD is introduced to meet the demand for a deeper, stronger boat for use in larger waters and capable of mounting a 30 h.p. motor. The FD, a genuine Erich Swenson design, has a depth amidship of 21" and is stronger and more rugged construction throughout. Seats are a full 12" wide. Forward and control decks shown are optional equipment.

Heavily reinforced it has 12" wide flotation seats, and Aqueduct transom. This Model FD is OBC Certified for 30 h.p. outboard motors. It is an ideal all-around boat for large waters.

The new Merry "M"-16 meets the demand for a larger, luxury runabout capable of mounting a 30 h.p. motor on its special Aqueduct transom. Fast and racy with a low center of gravity, this Merry "M" has full decking, full length splash rails, polished coaming, polished gunwales, and soft Kapok Coast Guard life-preserver cushions.

The 19 foot Big Boy Runabout is the largest in the Aluma Craft line. It has a 78" beam, 73" wide and 20" deep Aqueduct transom. Optional equipment includes a canvas convertible top which will, in effect, make it a day cruiser.

With the addition of these models, the Aluma Craft line now has a model and size of boat, canoe and runabout for practically every use.

On The Tackle Shelves

By Ben C. Robinson

The 2-piece ACTIONGLAS Casting Rod

FOR a considerable time now there has been a feeling that the lengths of the new bait casting rods have been excessively long and that the problem of transporting the average rod in cars, by air or other means of travel offers a sometimes serious obstacle to our fishing trips. Rods of even moderate length in one-piece tip styles, with detachable handle sections, have a tendency to not fit handily into restricted spaces in automobiles, canoes, boats or in making trips afoot between lakes and stream fishing spots. To correct some of this awkwardness in getting to and from the fishing pools with the rods of favored lengths and actions Ochard Industries, Inc., Hastings, Michigan, have introduced their new ACTIONGLAS 2-piece, Model 4160-D bait casting contribution to the angling public. After using this two-section and detachable handle and reel seat rod in a variety of genuine fishing tests it would seem that those who have been clamoring for handier carrying tackle now have the opportunity to own a take-down model of bait casting rod that will do the thinks that many of us have heretofore been expecting only of the one-piece tip type of casting choices. The Actionglas rod that I have personally used to fish with this past spring on lake and stream has a fast, sharp and true aiming tip action that shoots even the lightest of casting lures and baits directly and accurately at the fishing target. It does not call for a hard, heaving pressure of the wrist and arm to send a lure far and straight. I was somewhat puzzled in my first tests with this rod on long shots with accuracy to place the cast in eddy or brushy and weedy fringed spots where the promises of a good fish reposed to understand how the ACTIONGLAS'S makers had handled this matter of speed and timing with the 2-piece outfit. Then I realized how they had accomplished this springy and easy accuracy of their 6 foot length model of the tubular glass fiber blade. It was done by building the butt, reel seat and forward grip of their rod heavier in weight than most of the rods we use and tapering down the stem at a sharp and light degree so as to get a powerful, yet easily handled "strength" in the detachable butt section. After using the rod for a short time the angler catches onto how this rod operates and it is really fun to slant a long and killing cast with it with an ease of backcast that is really amazing with any of the various weights and types of spinners, spoons, artificial minnows and plugs. With just a short, quick wrist spring, holding the rod slightly pointing back over my shoulder, and with a quarter-ounce lure snapped to a 4 foot nylon casting leader and a new Ashaway Dacron, 30 lbs. test class line and with an old and veteran Shakespeare Wondereel to complete the outfit, I was able to cast far and effectively with the new rod. It does not call for some of the vigorous back sweeps so often necessary to send a lure whizzing out straight and to the fraction of an inch of the brush or pad edges. It only requires a shrewd aim, springing the rod tip back with an effortless flirt over the angler's shoulder and then inclining the rod wrist sharply forward with a muscular snap. That does it and the reason for this easy and accurate casting with the Actionglas is because of the way in which the butt has been heavied up so as to give that lustrous and beautifully tapered blade of the two-piece rod that life that really endears it to the heart of a veteran old lure shooter. My good friend, Toby Shopper, of the Arbogast Bait Company (makers of the Popper and Jitterbug) was along with me on the first test trial I made of the Actionglas 6' rod. He and my old partner "Dick" smiled at my startled enthusiasm and then Toby saw that I was catching on to the secret of the new rod. He uses one of these rods also. The further details of the Actionrod might well be explained here. The guides are of well tempered carbaloy and they decrease as they near the tip top. These guides on this particular rod are noticeably smaller than some of the rods I have used previous to the test and this perhaps also serves to lighten the stem of the rod. The ferrule that connects the two sections of the Actionglas are unnoticeable in their deep dark glossiness. They fit snug and the rod is perfectly staunch with no loose play whatever—on my test model. The butt section of the rod slips neatly into a very nicely engineered collect at the front of the reel placement and with a few turns of this sleeve the outfit is locked into casting position. I might also explain another feature worth the study of a bait caster and that is the reel fastening or lock. This is a neatly hidden screw that operates at forward and under end of the offset reel seat. A few easy turns of this screw with one finger and the reel can be set in place, then a few turns in the opposite direction and the reel is secured safely. The handle is of a fine grade of cork. The color of the rod is a natural brown bamboo tone. With a good light reel like the Pflueger Nobby or the Shakespeare No. 1926 Direct Drive this rod is really a bit of modern bait casting magic and capable of handling anything from a tumbling bass to a floundering muskie or G. N. pike.

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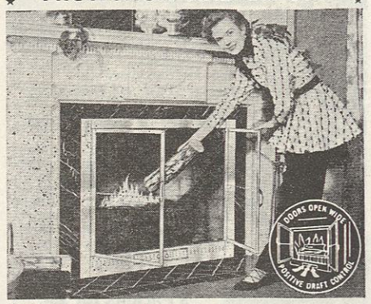

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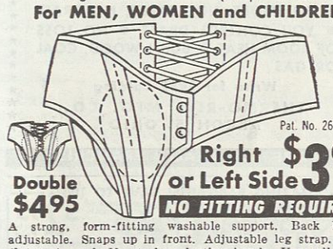

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unquestionably, one of the most useful items that has reached the Test Department of FUR FISH GAME this current season. It is a palm and pocket size molded plastic float, two and three-quarters inches long by one and a half inches in diameter and has all the buoyancy of a regular "bobber" style of line and bait and hook float. There is a bead chain swivel that holds another bead chain key container at the bottom end of the float and these are of rust resistant marine quality metal. On the key chain all such indispensable items as the keys for a cabin, hotel or resort room or house key or ignition keys for the automobile, or any other valuable the angler might have in his possession while fishing and portaging through the woods can be securely attached. If any accident like dropping these items overboard from a dock or from boat or shore should happen the plastic float will prevent such valuables from sinking and being possibly lost forever. The float is red and white in color, easily seen in the dusk or darkness as it drifts on the current or eddies of a pool or if it happens to be dropped from the fisherman's pockets on the trail or anyplace about camp. This float is manufactured and sold by the W. H. Watt Advertising Agency, Radnor, Pa. W. H. Watt, himself a veteran fisherman, invented the useful bit of key-saving equipment. It is an invaluable piece of tackle this testing department believes.

Leaving Both Hands Free

THROUGH the adaptability of the new synthetics that are now shaping up much of our fishing equipment an excellent fishing rod holder has been invented and brought into distribution by the Owen Manufacturing Company, Easton, Pa. This is a very practical bit of equipment for the angler who has to change flies and lures at frequent intervals while wading the stream or lake shore and also while casting from the shores and boat. It is the "Rod Kaddee," designed to hold most any type, weight and length of fishing rod firmly and conveniently while the angler who is wearing it on his belt, shirt or jacket front can just simply thrust the stem of his fishing rod between the two soft, sponge rubber balls that form the clamps of the holder and then go about tinkering with tackle, changing flies and leaders and making other necessary angling adjustments without the inconvenience and bother of having the rod tipping over, getting underfoot or in danger of serious damage in boat, stream or on shore. There is a 2½x5 inch plastic oblong of long wearing thickness that the two sponge-rubber balls at the base of this holder are attached to with strong, patented metal plate arrangement. There is also a belt opening which the angler can use to fasten the Rod Kaddee on with and a strong safety-pin which can be utilized to fasten the Rod Kaddee at any other convenient place on a fishing jacket, coat or shirt where the rod can be securely held under every fishing condition. This is not an expensive item of tackle, and one that serves a marvelous purpose for all classes of fishermen, whether fly, bait or spinning casters and anglers.

Masland's High Grade Fishing Jackets

IN considerable traveling around to the resort and fishing sections there was one noticeable feature encountered last season (1953) in respects to fishing clothes. A certain type of specially designed fishing jackets were often to be seen favored by veteran anglers and one of the popular styles was the C. H. Masland & Sons Klamath Coat and also this same sportsman's clothing maker's sleeveless Tac-L-Pak wading and fishing jacket. These two styles of utility fishing jackets differ chiefly in two main points. The Klamath Coat is a full sleeve, normal length style of fishing apparel, while the widely famous Tak-L-Pak that has been in use among anglers the full length and breadth of the country for some several seasons now is a short and sleeveless type of jacket. As I have found, these two excellent jackets serve the angler in a wide variety of angling purposes; the one a well made, cozy and roomy type of jacket with abundant pockets, and places for all average items of casting and fishing equipment and with full length sleeves, collar and coat-length body designing. This style is the Klamath Coat and I have found it to be ideally suited for boat fishing, for shore fishing and shore and portage uses in coolish-like weather or when rain and storm might be anticipated. The sleeveless Tak-L-Pak model of jacket is for the stream wading fisherman and the fly and bait caster who fishes in more than normally warm weather. Both styles of the famous C. H. Masland & Sons products for the fisherman's wear are very serviceable items of clothing when on a fishing trip. The material these two jackets are made of is a closely woven, strong fabric, of a very noticeable light sand color. It sheds ordinary showers satisfactorily and is tough and snag proof under average fishing conditions I found on testing the two garments mentioned. Both these two jackets were part of my fishing trips the past season and the previous one also when I used the Tak-L-Pak considerably. The material that is built into the jackets wears extremely well, does not hamper the angler's movements in casting or in moving about on shore or in stream or boat and prevents excessive perspiring on hot days, yet both the jackets seem to provide all the necessary warmth that is desired for those times when it is windy and raw on lake or stream. There are plenty of pockets for everything to be carried. Even the sleeves have pockets cleverly located where cigarettes, pipe and tobaccos and cigars can be stored without danger of damage and eye-glass receptacles and fly dressing compartments, leader niches and an adequate number of other places are all provided where the fisherman can store everything needed for a day or a week's trip and taken right along to be kept dry and orderly. There is a roomy pocket in both jackets for the carrying of the raincoat and extra bits of clothing, like dry socks, some extra sweat shirts, etc. at the back of the garments; places also for carrying fish in a nylon and plastic waterproofed creel that folds away out of sight when not in use. One of the important features that these garments also have added is the rod holder on front, and the pockets inside and on the outside for carrying lures, fly boxes and other equipment. There is a net holder also located so landing net hangs at the back where it is out of snagging danger by brush, etc. The point that is quite outstanding is that even when full of all the tackle any average trip calls for these jackets leave the angler free to fish with full comfort and activity and there is no feeling when they are worn with a full cargo of fishing tackle in the many pockets located over every available bit of space on them of sag, weight or burden. The owner is dry and warm when one of these jackets is worn, there is room for the lunch, raincoat of light plastic, and in very hot weather, when fishing a tough and brushy trout or smallmouth bass stream. I advise the Tak-L-Pak jacket for stream wading fishing and for hot weather boat or shore angling and the Klamath Coat style for those windy days of fishing on the larger lakes from a boat or for early spring and late autumn fishing when the weather gets nippy. The C. H. Masland & Sons firm that formerly manufactured this line of fine fishing garments in Carlisle, Pa., are now no longer handling the line, but the entire list of their fishing and hunting and outdoor garments are sold through the American Pad and Textile Company of Greenfield, Ohio—famous for their line of Tapatco camping and outdoor products. Formerly, when the C. H. Masland & Sons featured the Masland outdoor sportsmen's clothing line it was sold to dealers in various town and cities throughout the country. I can not say how this is handled now, but any one interested might write to The American Pad & Textile Co., at Greenfield, Ohio for information on this line of equipment.

Short Casts From The Fishing Desk

CORTLAND Line Company, Cortland, N. Y. makers of the famous "333" Cam-O-Flage Nonsinkable Bonded Finish nylon fly lines and a full repertory of other nylon and Dacron fly and bait casting and spinning lines have issued a "University of Fishigan, College Of Angling" diploma to the writer of this column. R. F. "Dick" Jennings, Cortland's Publicity Director is the Prexy of the Faculty of this idea. The Diploma is a real inviting looking piece of "Fishigan" and presents this finny honor to all those who have "demonstrated outstanding acumen in the art of plausible prevarication" and are thereby qualified to receive, "this degree of M. E. (Master of Exaggeration) . . ." I suspect that "Dick" has rated the Fishing Editor as a candidate for such a degree, eh?

The Enterprise Mfg. Co., The Pfluegers, Akron, Ohio have announced a new assortment of No. 4030 Consisting of 50 curved point ringed hooks in a handy plastic box that sells at 25 cents retail. These hooks are bronzed finish in sizes as follows, 3/0; 2; 1/0; 6; 4 in Kirby Pelican, Carlisle Pelican and Aberdeen Pelican types. For dealers information, the boxes are packed one dozen to a carton.

The Ashaway Line and Twine Company, Ashaway, R. I., are featuring their new Dacron bait casting, salt water fishing and spinning line that they brand as their "Lifeline" item in their long list of other lines for sea and fresh water angling. They also have another dacron line they list as their Invisible Grey Fishing Line of Dacron. The Fishing Editor is experimenting with both these lines and results have been excellent so far. Mor later on these experimnts.

Cortland Line Company, Cortland, N.Y. has a development in their "333" list that is called the "MOON GLO"; an ivory colored fly line for twilight fishing. At dusk when fly fishing's at its height this is supposed to be best. Haven't as yet tried this one out, but some fishermen I know have and they like the line fine for late evening fly fishing. Should be good for those sunset and after rises.

B. F. Gladding Co., South Otselic, N.Y. are pushing strong their new "Revolutionary Type" fly line that has air-bubbles sealed in its new type of coating. This insures the "Aerofloat" as they call the line, to float buoyantly and to improve casting. The air bubbles are sealed in the heavier coating that is used to surround the nylon filaments that Gladding braid into this line. It is a tapered model and the taper is arrived at differently than most times used in processing such types of line. The taper of the Aerofloat is controlled entirely by the coating, the strong central threads of the body remaining the same thickness and number throughout. The synthetic around threads is shaped to give any diameter of taper the angler desires.

Chicago National Boat Show

The "sold-out" sign was hung out today (Thurs., Nov. 18) over the 22nd annual Chicago National Boat Show, which will be presented next February 4 through 13 at Chicago's International Amphitheatre.

Guy W. Hughes, the show's Executive Director, told marine industry leaders attending a meeting of the exposition's industry advisory committee this afternoon, that the '55 public and trade show is 40 percent larger than last year, making it the largest show of its kind in the world.

"Despite the addition of 50,000 square feet of exhibit space in the new south wing of the Amphitheatre," Hughes said, "applications from both old and new exhibitors exceeded available space."

Some 236 firms in the marine field will show their '55 lines of inboard and outboard boats, sailboats, canoes, marine engines and outboard motors, trailers, and other marine accessory equipment during the 10-day show next February.

Manufacturers from 27 states are represented in the show, together with representatives from Sweden, Holland and Canada.

Hughes traced the demand for exhibit space to industry-wide expectations of another record year in production, sales and number of participants in America's fastest-growing sport.

One hundred boat manufacturers will exhibit inboard and outboard-powered craft ranging from small prams and dinghies up to big "home afloat" cruisers offering living and sleeping accommodations for as many as six people.

Twenty manufacturers of inboard engines and outboard motors will display power plants capable of pushing any craft in the Chicago Boat Show fleet. One hundred and seven boating equipment manufacturers will be represented in a preview of accessories designed for safety, comfort and ease of operation in boating.

Nine boating and outdoor sports publications are included among exhibitors.

Last year's record attendance of approximately 10,000 marine dealers from 41 states, Canada, Alaska and Hawaii will undoubtedly be surpassed this year, Hughes said. Total public and dealer attendance last year was over 200,000.

A reciprocal agreement between the Boat Show and the National Sporting Goods Association convention, to be held in Chicago from February 6 through 10, is expected to attract some 16,000 marine and sporting goods dealers to the two shows. The NSGA convention at the Morrison Hotel is open to the trade only.

The Boat Show will open its doors to the public and to dealers from 6 to 11 p.m. on opening night, February 4, and from 1 to 11 p.m. during the remaining nine days of the show. Dealers only will be admitted from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. on "Dealer Days," February 7, 8, 9 and 10.

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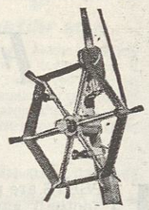

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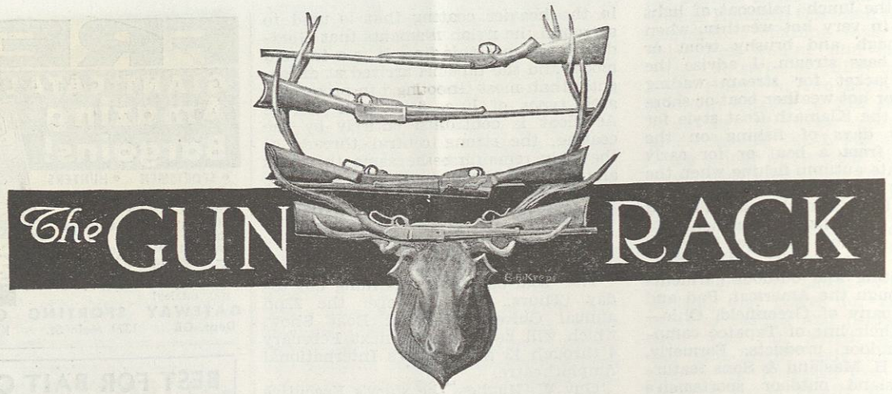


Facts Of Life For 30-30s

By Maurice H. Decker

UPSETS are possible in other things besides elections and football games. The deer-hunting gun market is no exception because the 30-30 which was the first successful smokeless caliber developed in this country and which for years has been our most popular whitetail rifle faces real competitive pressure.

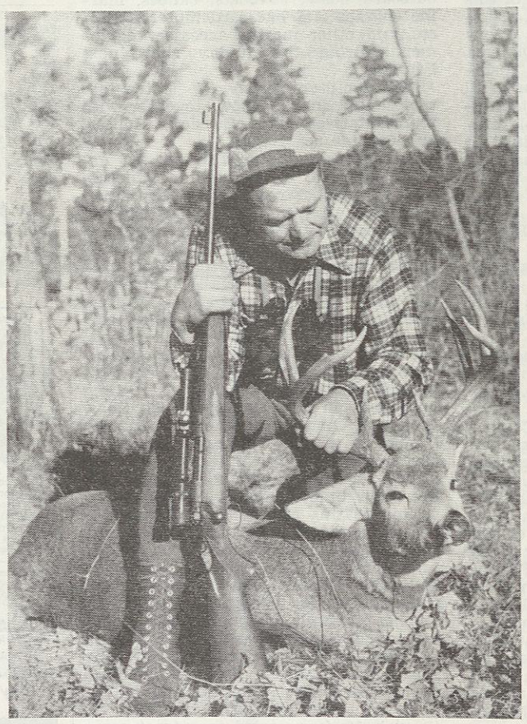
The rivals giving the 30-30 a run for anybody's money include such more recently designed loads as the 250-3000, the 257 Roberts, 300 Savage and 35 Remington. Most of these competitors show greater accuracy at short and long range and especially the latter and all of them can do a better job of some specific phase of medium-sized game hunting.

Take the 35 for instance. It is a better brush rifle because its big heavy bullet is less liable to glance from intervening twigs and branches and miss the target. The 35 hits a harder blow than the 30-30 and it puts deer down to stay more surely and often. In case of a near miss that only wounds, the 35 causes a better blood trail to follow and with dead center hits you get a larger per cent of one-shot kills. Finally the 35 carries enough wallop to successfully take on bigger game than deer in emergencies.

The 250-3000 and 257 shoot much flatter than the 30-30 and they hold up better at long ranges in both accuracy and power. This makes them superior for shots taken in open country, on the plains or in the mountains. Their speedier bullets ease the problem of aiming at varied distances and they moreover produce that intensity of shock to which deer are susceptible. Rifles handling 250-3000 and 257 cartridges also have added utility, they are excellent for hunting vermin in addition to being effective on deer.

The 300 Savage is probably the most serious 30-30 competitor of all. It's a better load both from angles of power and accuracy for any kind of deer hunting in any type of cover. The heaviest 300 bullet is reliable in brush and it performs ably at long range. The lighter bullet furnished in this ammunition gives an easy-to-aim trajectory and causes severe shock when it hits. Both bullets strike heavier blows than the 30-30 and make more one-shot kills.

The 300 Savage too is adequate for bigger game, deadly on mule deer and larger species. Both the 300 and the 35 have been frequently recommended in these columns to deer hunters who find the 30-30 short of power for the conditions under which they shoot.



Buck taken in the Black Hills area of South Dakota. Photo by Bert Popowski.

All of this adds up to some active competition which has without doubt affected 30-30 sales because when a hunter buys a 35, 300, 257 or 250-3000 he is choosing that gun instead of a 30-30 and chances are he won't at any time own them both. Still I haven't heard of any manufacturer offering his 30-30 tools and dies for sale and I don't expect to. The rifles are still in demand and will continue to be for many years. We must remember too that although 30-30 sales may be affected by a trend towards other calibers, overall business hasn't because no rifle maker confines his efforts to the 30-30 alone. All also produce some of the competitors which is smart practice because it enables them to maintain volume by meeting the demands of those sportsmen wanting something else.

The 30-30 ammounition too is still loaded in quantity and stocked by dealers and traders all over the world. There is no possibility of it ever becoming obsolete, at least not in our lifetime. In fact 30-30 cartridges have been recently improved with a new lighter bullet that gives higher muzzle velocity and boosts 30-30 performance on game in certain phases of hunting.

We can't question the high esteem in which the 30-30 has been held by sportsmen all over the world. You find these rifles almost anywhere game the size of deer is hunted. Mexico, Canada and the Arctic have absorbed large numbers. Theodore Roosevelt took a 30-30 with him to Africa. It was the first successful high power smokeless load offered Americans and the speed with which it obsoleted the big bore black powder cartridges in common use then, was amazing.

Winchester introduced the 30-30 caliber, adapting it to their smooth action Browning invented model 1894 lever repeater. The rifle came first (those puzzled over the riddle of whether chicken superseded egg take heart) because it was originally chambered for two popular black powder cartridges, 32-40 and 38-55. But the 30-30 rifle and carbine were the ones that made history for this rifle. I think too they made as much real money for their sponsor as any other arm produced by that organization for civilian use.

The 30-30 was named from the bore diameter of its barrel, normally 300 and because the case would hold thirty grains of black powder. Other manufacturers caught on fast and every factory that builds big game rifles has at some time or other made the 30-30 or its equivalent the 30 rimless. This list includes names like Winchester, Marlin, Savage, Remington, Stevens and Standard, the last firm has been out of existence for many years.

Today the production picture is different, one reason for thinking that the 30-30 is not the standard deer rifle it used to be. All but Winchester, Savage and Marlin have dropped the caliber and are bidding for business with other sizes. I have already mentioned 250-3000, 257, 300 and 35 as active competitors. There are others because numerous hunters who shoot deer carry such rifles as the 270, 308 and 30-06, admittedly rather strenous for such small stuff as whitetails but found in a lot of deer cover just the same.

Another straw in the wind to indicate public preference might be the reduction in the number of breech actions available for 30-30 loads. At one time you had your choice of four, today only the lever and the bolt type survive.

The original 30-30 cartridge developed 2025 ft. sec. of velocity with the 170 grain bullet. Today this is increased to 2200 by utilizing improved powder that gives better combustion and a harder push without a serious increase in pressure. The newer 150-grain 30-30 bullet moves at the rate of 2410 ft. sec. for better performance and flatter trajectory at moderate range. This lighter bullet however doesn't hold up any too well because at 200 yards the regular 170-grain ball has almost caught up with it in some makes of ammunition and actually surpassed it in others.

The 170-grain bullet cartridge is your best bet for shooting in thick cover. The 150-grain size can be chosen for open cover deer hunting and it is also best to shoot any of the larger sizes of vermin when the 30-30 rifle is used.

Accuracy of the original 30-30 load wasn't so hot as judged by modern standards. I doubt if any bench rest shooter would be happy with the groups made by 30-30 then or even now. Formerly if you could fire a 5 or 6-inch cluster at 100 yards you figured you were in the groove. Some rifles I owned made in take-down style (they were a pitfall for the unwary rifleman) wouldn't do that well. Now with a modern rifle and ammunition you can cut those figures in half. Some improvement in 30-30 accuracy should probably be credited to the better sights mounted on the rifles. The ammunition too is better and of course solid frame construction does its part.

Although many hunters in many countries have killed many kinds of big game with a 30-30, it actually boils down to being a good deer gun, nothing more. In the hands of a careful marksman the 30-30 load anchors deer and eastern black bear quite promptly at moderate range. It is most useful in brush and timber because it lacks the velocity and long range stability needed for mountain and open plains shooting where targets may be up to 350 yards away. Power of the 30-30 is adequate for deer and small bear but inadequate to successfully hunt elk, moose and big bear. For these larger animals it lacks both range and foot pound energy as well as penetration.

An undeniable asset of the 30-30 gun is mobile speed. Most models are short and light, they handle fast and can be aimed and fired quickly in timber. This feature above all others has been responsible for the caliber's widespread use and popularity. The recoil is moderate too, ammunition reasonably priced and as noted before well distributed so you can pick up a box or two just about any place where big game exists and hunters act.

The biggest handicap of the 30-30 next to medium power is its comparatively short effective range. I hesitate to advise it for shots longer than 150-175 yards; you'll have better success if you cut these figures by 25. Hunters of course often try for more distant targets and sometimes they succeed. Other times they fail and even if the bullet hits now, it may only cause a wound that allows the animal to escape and die unrecovered.

Bigger game than deer has been killed with the 30-30 but such happenings are exceptions that prove the rule because the men involved are usually exceptionally good stalkers or good marksman or both. Unfortunately we are not all so endowed with these skills and must employ firearms with more power to make up for that lack. The 30-30 therefore is in my opinion neither a good all-round big game rifle nor a long range one.

I have mentioned the rimless equivalent of the 30-30. In the past at least three manufacturers chose this 30 rimless in preference to the original rimmed cartridge when they built rifles in this bore. That choice may have been a bad one, perhaps it was necessary because of the design of action used by the new rifle and which would handle the rimless case best. Anyway the 30 rimless is already a gone goose so far as new rifles being made for it goes. There are none as you probably know. Ammunition of course will continue to be available for a very long time.

Currently the following models of 30-30 rifles and carbines are in active production and can be found listed in gun dealer catalogs and in stores.

Winchester model 1894. Made in carbine form only although the action is identical with the other 30-30 Winchesters. Barrel is 20 inches, weight 6¼ to 6½ lbs., full length magazine holds six cartridges which plus one in the chamber gives the hunter a total of seven. Rear sight is special carbine open type, front sight is mounted on ramp forged integrally with barrel and is provided with a removable cover. No chance of this sight being knocked loose or off from hard bumps and saddle use. Price about $69.

Winchester Model 64. Has the time tested model 1894 action, a 24-inch barrel and weight of about 7 lbs. Stock is plain but well shaped for off-hand marksmanship and carries a pistol grip. Magazine is two-thirds length to hold five shells. Regular sighting equipment consists of an open sporting rear and a bead front, also ramp supported and

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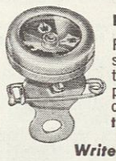

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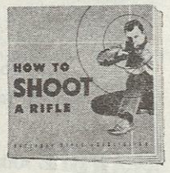

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supplied with removable cover. Receiver is drilled and tapped for several models of receiver sights. This is a nicely balanced gun, not so fast to handle perhaps as the carbine but it permits more accuracy because of the longer barrel. Price about $91.

Winchester 64 Special Deer Rifle. Basically the plain or regular model deer rifle with attractive extras. Stock and forearm are checkered and fitted with caps. Quick detachable army type swivels and a sling strap are included, the sling proves handy to back pack rifle when you need both hands to carry out game. Sighting equipment is the same as the plain 64 but the rifle weighs a little more. Price about $108.

Marlin Model 336. There are actually five types of this model chambered for the 30-30 cartridge which differ in stock shape, barrel and magazine length as well as accessory equipment. Three models are carbines with 20-inch barrels, two of which have full length seven-shot magazines, one has the two-thirds size magazine holding six. Two carbines carry pistol grip stocks, the third is the straight grip "Texan" gun designed for saddle service. Weights are around 7 lbs., prices approximate $69.

There are two models of Marlin 336 rifles. Each has a 24-inch barrel, 6-shot two-thirds length magazine and open sights. The special rifle carries a checkered stock and forearm and swivels with strap. It costs $100. The plain rifle sells for $84, both weigh some 7½ lbs.

All five Marlin 30-30 guns have the familiar basic 1893 lever action with improved parts to provide extra strength for modern pressures. The bolt is round and the receiver is milled from tough alloy steel. Cartridge carrier has been worked over for smoother reloading. Extra strength was necessary because this rifle is also chambered for the more powerful 35 cartridge. Marlin lever repeaters have solid top receiver and side ejection port, an advantage should you ever want to use them with scopes.

Savage Models 340, 340S. This is the newest 30-30 repeater on the market and appears to be an improved version of the 30-30 this firm formerly marketed under the Stevens brand. It is a better looking job and carries a 24-inch barrel instead of one measuring only 21. Bolt cocks on the opening stroke, trigger mechanism gives a nice pull and speedy ignition. Magazine is detachable clip or box type, it holds four cartridges and there is room for one more in the chamber. Regular sight equipment includes an open rear and a front ramp bead with gold insert. The open rear sight incidentally has a disc adjustment with clicks and is much easier changed for slight variations than those open sights worked with elevator slides. Receiver side is drilled and tapped for the popular Weaver scope detachable side mount. Weight of the Savage 340 is 6¾ lbs., price about $49.

Model 340S is a deluxe version of the gun described above. Open sight is replaced with a micro peep and the front bead carries a hood or cover. Sling swivels are also attached and the stock checkered in two places. Other specifications are the same as the companion 340 except price which runs about $61.

New Low Cost Auto Pistol

The Dura-matic, a new model 22 long rifle caliber autoloading pistol is now being offered by High Standard Mfg. Corp., Hamden, Conn. This is the newest member of the High Standard line and lists for the lowest price of any High Standard pistol—only $37.50.

The Dura-matic offers top accuracy and fine performance for its price. Quality construction and features are built into the gun. There's a double safety feature; visible indicator to show when pistol is ready to fire and a combination side lock and positive cross bolt safety. The magazine holds ten loads and releases with a push button. Accuracy is assured by the wide, square notched rear sight. Front sight is the blade type.

You have a choice of two barrel lengths, either 6½ or 4½ inches. Barrels are easily interexchangable and you can obtain both lengths by paying $7.50 extra. The grips are molded diamond checkered. The gun has nice sleek lines and excellent balance.

This new moderate cost gun will make a splendid sidearm for camping trips, you'll like it for teaching youngsters to shoot and it will find many uses if stored in your fishing tackle box. The Dura-matic is an entirely new model and does not replace any other High Standard model. Free literature describing the gun in detail can be obtained by writing the factory, or one can be inspected at your sporting goods dealer.

Buck Or Bull For $35

(Continued from Page 9)

see Dale and John coming, dragging a deer that turned out to be a twin of John's four-pointer.

"I'd just as soon go back to the cabin and help," offered John. Dale seconded his offer. So I added some details to the map on the snow and we left the lunch for Les and Jim, when they got back from their current swing. Then I drove down the road until I felt I was opposite the doe and buck Ray and I had killed shortly after daybreak, while John and Dale back-tracked and dragged the two carcasses out.

In half an hour we were on our way, the front seat full of three hunters, and six deer carcasses piled higher than our shoulders riding on the lowered rear apron of the station-wagon. Oddly enough, my buck was the only animal of the lot that had suffered wasted meat; all the others were shot so cleanly that a derby hat would have held the damaged venison.

While the boys unloaded the deer at the cabin I put a low fire under a roaster full of antelope meat. By the time we got back to the cabin at the end of that day we'd have only some vegetables to cook for a husky dinner. Then we teamed up on hanging the deer, head up, on some husky spikes I'd driven into the cabin's north wall long before the season opened.

"You know, I'd like to come back toward the tail end of the season and keep one tag for an elk," said John. "If I don't hit one then I can always take another buck to fill out."

"That sounds silly, but as the shooting dies down to the end of November there might be a slim chance of finding a herd outside the two Parks," I admitted. "Of course the butchering there, combined with the fading of hunting outside, might push them out more readily than this early."

Ray, Jim and Les had been in, eaten their lunch, drained the thermos bottles of coffee, and were back in the woods. But during our absence one of them had bagged another buck, a forkhorn that lay beside the one deer we had left behind on our initial trip to the cabin.

South Dakota laws permits any deer or elk to be left untagged until the moment when it is loaded into a conveyance to carry it into some camp or living quarters. Or, if a deer is killed so near some habitation where it is to be hung, it can be dragged to that point and then tagged. This ruling permits a full crew of hunters to stay out in the woods to help any of the party fill out the bag limit. The only requirement is that all such aides must also possess legal licenses, though their tags may be filled.

"If the boys followed the additions I made to the map they've very likely driven deer back into the "Thumb" area of The Hand," I guessed. "So why don't the two of you go up on stands on Forefinger Ridge, and I'll try a one-man drive in that thick stuff where you got your two bucks?"

"We better place ourselves so we can watch on both sides of the ridge," suggested John. "Because the other boys might just bring something back from the other valleys of The Hand."

"Good idea," I agreed. "I'll give you 20 minutes to get set."

I made no effort at stalking on that slippery hillside. The rifle went along, but only to help on a cripple if such an eventuality arose. Most of my efforts were directed to making as much noise as possible. So I was continually breaking off dead branches of the trees I passed, then noisily thwacking them against the next tree trunks I encountered. I found some tracks but there was little chance to tell if they were fresh.

The long shadows were helping to sharpen the cold of coming evening before I got around that last curve of the Forefinger Ridge. My legs keenly felt the pull of the steep trail I tackled to get on top, my drive all but over. But when I heard the sharp slam of a rifle I speeded my steps, anxious to find out what I'd pushed out in rifle range.

Minutes later when I topped out and could look along the run of the ridge for 200 yards I could see John. He waved me on and I took the level going at a faster clip.

"Where is he?" I demanded.

John shook his head. "Nicest whitetailed buck I've seen in the Hills," he began his explanation. The slam of a rifle along the ridge cut him short. "Must be Dale," he injected.

"That buck came out with eight does and fawns, all traveling at a running walk. When they got opposite me, about 90 yards away, I pulled down on the buck, waited until he cleared a big pine, and touched off the shot. He went down like a ton of bricks, while the does just vanished. So I just sat there.

"In a minute he kind of scissored his legs, still flat on his side. Then his head came up and, before I could get the rifle up, he was on his feet and around that point of rock. I never saw him again," he said, sadly.

"You never will, either," I guessed. "You must have creased him along the top of the neck. That put him down, knocked out. But when the shock wore off he was just as good as new, with very little bleeding. Let's take his trail until dark anyway."

At 25-yard intervals we found blood, just a drop or two on each side of the buck's firm running tracks. I pointed out that this was probably bounced off his neck in his bounding run.

The trail paralleled the length of Forefinger Ridge, then cut up the slope. No crippled buck would tackle that steep ascent. In fact I didn't care much about tackling it, except that the car awaited us in that direction.

We'd just leveled off when I saw a figure stooped over, steam rising from the entrails he was hauling out of a deer. A buck I saw, as we drew nearer. And then Dale stood up, a wide smile on his face.

"Just like money from home," he observed. "That buck came walking over the top of the ridge, stopping to look back every few yards. When he got about 40 yards away I broke his neck. and somebody had got a bullet into him, only it was barely more than skin deep. Fresh, too!"

"Sure," said John, turning the buck over. "I slow him up and you kill him! Where's the justice in that?"

"I kind of figured he might be yours," admitted Dale. "But I didn't figure you'd want to run him down, dark as it's getting."

That evening, over a succulent roast of an antelope buck I had downed almost two months earlier, we were a mighty hilarious crew. In between stoking the fireplace and spinning yarns, I noticed that my long-barreled flashlight was in constant demand—to allow the boys, in pairs and threes, to view the fine string of nine whitetail deer, five of them bucks.

"I'm not even getting up in the morning," I yawned. "Just wake me up when you get back. Why it isn't worth while for all six of us to go after one lonely deer."

My prediction came true. While I was still in my pajamas, and sipping an awakening cup of hot coffee the boys had left for me, back they came. And in the Jeep station-wagon rode the careless buck that filled out the boys' ten tags.

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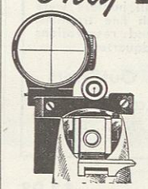

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In The Whispering Blades

By Ben C. Robinson

IT WAS a lonely, strange country that we looked out over that morning in mid-November. How different it was from the lush, rich, productive grey swamplands we had many opening days of pheasant season before then, scrutinized from the windy lot where Charlie Matthes holds open house to all his old shooting acquaintances! This time there wasn't a single car in Charlie's barnyard. We had driven by that morning and glanced that way, but Chet motioned silently for Starker to keep on going.

"There's no use—this time." Chet explained sadly. "For fifteen years we have never failed to stop and wait for the zero hour to tick off there at Charlie's house."

"It seems like a shame, Chet to go by and not stop to say hello," I muttered.

"It's no use." Chet said firmly. "We'll keep on driving." He was firm about it.

"Charlie's little girl was standing on the steps, did you notice?" I said to Dick as our car turned up the branch road toward the old Houk place. Dick nodded. He and I were in the back seat keeping quiet and letting Charlie and Chet plan the details of the day's hunting. We had been warned in the town up at the head of the wide basin valley that there were not many birds expected to be shot that day by hunters. One of the worst droughts in years had plagued the dirt farmers there on the plain lands of western Ohio. But, regardless of the rumors that had been voiced around the entire state, the town was full of hunters that morning. Chet and Charlie claimed there were as many there as they had ever seen on opening day. But I didn't agree with them. There were plenty of strangers in the town, to be sure, and bright red hunting caps, flashy new dead-grass colored shooting coats and breeches and trousers still creased and fresh from the sporting counters of the shops where sportsmen do their dealing were brightening up the slowly lifting morning mist when we drove down the street that leads out into the big plain lands. But someway I felt a difference.

There wasn't that bustle and hurry and the feverish spirit that I have always felt present on the streets of Pheasantville like in the days gone by. I hadn't seen a single bird dog nervously straining at the leash that morning.

Still there were hunters and as we drove down the high road between the drainage ditches we began to see cars parking along the right-of-way. But at Charlie's old place—not a single shiny sedan or convertible was in sight. Just that one figure standing expectantly on the stoop of Charlie's frame farm house—one of his flaxen haired little girls and she was all dressed up to meet the men that Daddy had always greeted there during her eight or ten years of life. She wore her best scarlet coat and her hair was all done up and she was standing as if she was going to greet us.

"Darn the luck, that kid keeps bothering me." I muttered to Dick as we continued to cruise along the roads that wandered around on the south side of the old hunting grounds where we had never failed to stop before that.

"I was a kid once myself," I grumbled, "and the first day of bird season was a big event in my life. We might at least have stopped and said something, maybe given her a little something to buy a sack of candy with—"

"Ah!" Chet said grimly, "Forget Charlie's place. There wasn't enough bird cover there to hide a sparrow. He hasn't a field of corn on his farm. Just bare clover and some corn that's been picked and the stalks disced under and wheat planted. How can you find pheasants in that kind of country?"

Chet was right there. Charlie had no standing corn out, neither had he any alfalfa or soy bean crops. The ditches were dry as a bone all along his property and there weren't even any weeds. The country was burned to a crisp.

Holding a huddle in a field of corn that had been picked and broken down, Chet, Dick and Charlie agree that our luck could have been far worse on ringnecks.

We found the same condition wherever we went. We swung back east toward the town after we had passed the old Houk place and followed a low dividing ridge there. There was a stream down in that valley, but there wasn't any standing corn along it that we could see. We finally reached the place where the road bent back into town. There at a corner there was a nice field of big corn along the creek that looked like pheasant hunting. It hadn't been picked, but there was a sign up on the trees and telephone poles saying it was reserved land.

Off to our left as we slowly followed out the town road there were red signs that forbade hunting there. That was on a state sanctuary and pheasant reserve. There always were oodles of birds around it. But we saw no signs of them and when we came to the next intersection where the one road ran straight down the basin valley we turned that way again. The two old veterans, Charlie and Chet, had been cornered, at last.

Fifteen years to the day before that very hour they had started hunting birds there in the Basin. In all that time they had never missed but one fall hunt along that stretch of road. There's probably two miles of it and on either side the country is ideal for ringneck pheasants. On the right the fields slope off with a barely preceptible dip to a muck land bottom where there's a big open ditch that cuts straight through the basin with pin oaks along it and plenty of scrub brush. There's a woodland in its center section. On all sides of the woods there's big fields that have always been crop land, corn mostly. Corn that used to grow more than head high with ears that lopped down like heavy sash weights and in those sequestered wilds of yellow ears we have shot literally scores of the finest big cock ringnecks that ever graced a gormant's groaning table around Thanksgiving.

Chet groaned as we rolled silently along and saw this once heavenly rendezvous of pheasants in its desolate condition. There was nothing there but a few anemic looking splotches of stunted stalks from which even at that early season the farmer had snapped off the ears. The big drainage ditch or canal, we knew very well was dry. The dusty, withered look of the oaks along it were enough to convince us of its aridity. There were not enough weeds around to hide a colony of chipmunks!

"Remember, how they used to fly from those stalks over the road here to the reserve woods, there at the left." old Chet reminisced to Charlie.

Starker pressed his lips grimly together and made a reply that sounded something like a fox terrier growling at some one approaching the front veranda.

"Gosh durn it, yes!" he snapped. "Tell ye what let's do, fellows. Let's park here on this old flight lane across the basin where the birds used to cross to the reserve woods and let's go across this field to the left and follow down the edge of the woods back in the safety zone and take up our stand there at that corner where that brushy fence line and the woods meet. I can see what looks like some kind of a stunted corn field there on the west of the woods. There always were birds there. Maybe there will be some out feeding and when nine o'clock strikes we'll be there."

There was no need to hurry, for there was not a hunter in sight. Good Lord! Charlie snapped, there used to be a hundred hunters waiting to get to that prize spot. Well, that morning there were not more than half a dozen showed up. We were there on the stand at the corner when it struck nine. Off to the west we used to hear a perfect barrage of shooting at that moment there were a few popping shots broke out. Then some one began putting on a pretty active barrage over at the south side of our field. There's an old orchard there and soon we heard a beagle hound bugling, then more shots.

"Blast it they're shooting—rabbits! Starker groaned.

That's what they were doing. We hunted through that field and back again. The corn was like switches stuck in the ground and we put up one lone cock bird and Chet, Charlie and Dick let go at it in a salvo that only served to spur it on at higher speed across the withered corn stalks and into another

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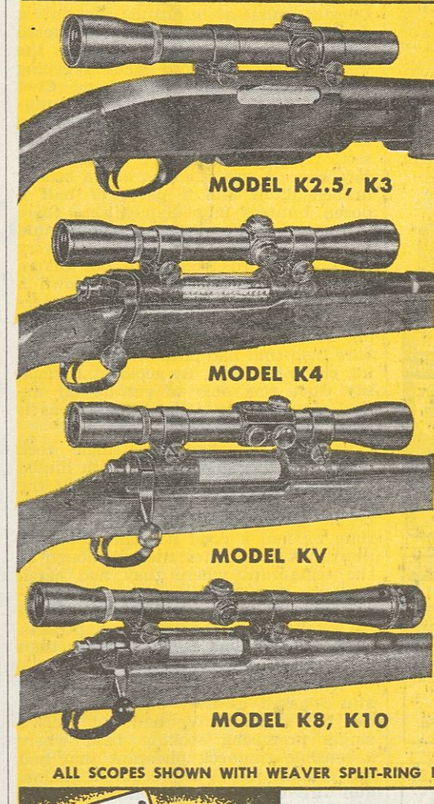

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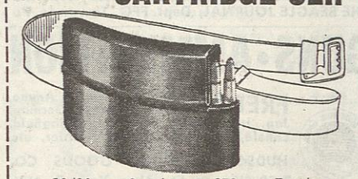

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field to the west. I hunted every brushy clump and weed patch I could find and saw only two stunted looking hen pheasants. I was standing along the side of the brush that marked the old fence line between the farm we were on and the one that belonged to the one wih the old orchard on it, when I saw Chester miss a beautiful shot at a cock bird that got up from the scattered stalks several hundred yards to the west of me. The bird went sweeping right past the old hunter and Chet rattled off three shots with his automatic and not a feather drifted off on the warm autumn breeze. The bird settled down at a corner of the fence row where I was standing and a brushy branch ditch and a party of half a dozen hunters immediately were there to route it up and I saw it crumple and fall. There was a hunter for every stray cock bird from then on. Before noon Chet managed to chase down a long flying cock that some other hunters had wasted perhaps a full box of shells on. It settled half a mile away in a bare field that had once been a flourishing clover meadow. By accident I would say Chet was able to get up on the bird close enough to make a kill as it took flight.

At noon we had one single cock pheasant. Chet and Charlie both hinted we might go home after lunch, but the old tenacious spirit of the two veterans began to make itself evident by the time we had a good hot dinner stowed away. We felt better then, although at the restaurant where they had eaten hunters were relating their sad experiences in trying to find even a bird to weight their shooting coat pockets. Most of them had done no better than our party.

"Where do you plan to go now?" Dick and I asked as they picked us up at our host's house. We had not seen a single promising looking field where a sensible ringneck pheasant that had any ordinary sense of precaution against gun fire would consider hiding on an opening day. Even pheasants have some sense of self protection and the coverts we had hunted and inspected that morning had no protective recommendations and neither had they any of the other essential points that must be considered when one expects to find birds plentiful or even fairly plenty. There had been no water at all where we had been that morning and very little standing corn and no tall, heavy and unpicked corn. Pheasants are too canny to try to stay in such hazardous and arid surroundings.

Chet mumbled something about us looking around and maybe finding a better place. Defeat comes hard with an old hunter like Chet. But as we were leaving the town's fringe, Chet suddenly commanded Charlie to stop the car. Following his suggestion Starker drew to the side of the road. There, to the right of the road, not more than four hundred yards from the very corporation limits and not over that far back from the highway was a large corn field.

"Just what we've been looking for all morning!" Chet grinned. "Look back beyond the weed field here at the side of the standing corn. See that stone crushing building? And see the water gushing out of that large pipe? Well, notice that there's a line of brush leading down from the crusher past the far end of the corn field—notice that?"

We all nodded. Yes, we saw all those things. Charlie grunted impatiently. "What does all those things mean? You surely don't hope to find pheasants right here at the edge of the town's corporation markers do you?" he demanded of Chet.

"I surely do." Chet shot back at him. "This is what you have been harping on all day, water and standing corn and weeds! See how green the leaves still are on those pin oaks that you see along that far ditch. That means there's water running in it! Come on, let's try it."

It seemed like a foolish thing to try, for there had been hundreds of hunters past that place all morning and if there even had been pheasants hiding there in the tall standing corn and the weed field at its side—and, no doubt there had been, for a ringneck will stay literally in the backyard of a surburban town residence section, if there's a corn field and weed patch to shelter it—even if there had been a flock of birds there they, no doubt, by that time would be all hunted and scattered out of there.

But there was the surprise of the day. We hunted back toward the tall grey stone crusher building through the weed field first. That was Chet's idea and we followed it up with a feeling we had to humor the old boy. Then we spaced ourselves over at the far side of the standing corn field. It was really an old fashioned corn stand, the kind the Basin farmers always before had grown in their lowland prairie fields. The stalks were big and high, the ears hung down heavy and the foliage on the stalks had yellowed and bannered and sang in the keen afternoon wind. The ditch at its far end was lined with wild rose, shrub willow and a lot of weeds and young pin oak saplings. Chet slipped into the corn on the left side, and Charlie took the next few rows from him, leaving Dick and I to take the windy side of the stalks. That's another trick those two old ringneck hunters always work on Dick and I. They know that the birds will run their way and be ahead of them so they can take flight with the wind at their tails and they will swing around and try to reverse their flights to cut back of the hunters. But that's what Chet and Charlie like. They've practiced such shooting until they are nearly perfect at it. We had only gone part way through the long field when Dick called to me that there was a flock of pheasants ahead. He had seen them running down the corn rows. I saw them start walking across ahead of me and two big cock birds went skipping down the row in plain sight. I could have pulled a pot shot on them both, but I have never been that desperate for game yet, so I warned Charlie there were cocks ahead of us and we stepped up the pace of our advance. The first cock that went up hit the air almost directly in front of Charlie and the feathers drifted off on the wind, while the bird plummeted down a clean kill! The next cock bird went out ahead of Chet. He bagged it at the edge of the weedy field. There were two more cock birds and several hens in the flock and one of the cocks flared up at one side of me and was brought tumbling with a swinging shot. A matter of seconds later and another big fellow in all its panoply of gleaming colors burst upward and streaked toward the wheat field

that lay in long green levels to the right of Dick's side of the field of corn. He brought this bird down with a nicely handled shot and it slanted down far out in the green wheat and lay still. That was four birds in a very few minutes and Chet gave a wild whoop of celebration as we came to the end of the stalks and compared our fortunes. We each one had a bird and there was one to spare. "I told you there were birds in those standing stalks and you can't say that old Chet doesn't know his pheasant shooting, eh? I can call them, fellows, every time!"

Charlie grinned wryly and turned away.

"Yea!" he said pungently. "You called the places we should hunt all morning and a fine job you did of that!"

"Well," said Chet defensively. "There wasn't any whispering corn stalks to tell me the truth about pheasants down where we hunted this morning. You got to have corn blades a whispering to get good ringneck pheasant hunting!" I think Chet was right when he said that!

Smart Cottontail

By Francis Donovan

I'LL bet that there weren't many readers who, after reading Carlos Vinson's piece "Cottontails Ain't Where They Used To Be," didn't let their thoughts wander back over some of their rabbit hunting experiences. A lot of odd things have happened to my buddy Bill and myself on our hunting excursions—but both of us never say much to this day about the time a durned bunny made fools out of the three of us—Bill, myself, and our beagle dog.

We'd taken along our .20 gauges, and the three of us were sort of prospecting around along the edge of a low depression that followed the river; the stream wandered through a wide and long pasture lot, and right plumb down the center of the lot, this river meandered along with alder and willow thickets along both banks. The cool fall day had put enough crispness into the air to keep us alert, and the pup was full of life casting about for a scent. Where the stream really narrowed down to just a few feet in width, the beagle seemed to be getting excited, but Bill & I were both sort of dubious about waking up a rabbit down in that bottomland. Mostly because we'd been over that area countless times before and never flushed anything but birds. It was, however, a good spot for chucks, though. Anyway, we'd gotten about one third of the way across that open pasture lot, when at the same moment that the beagle hollered, a cottontail came pounding out of a clump of willow deadfall, dashed along the edge of the thicket, and popped back into the brush. So far, he was acting like any normal bunny, and Bill and I planned accordingly; figuring on where we'd jumped the critter, we thought we had a chance of seeing him coming around to us again.

We thought that way until we caught a glimpse of the beagle on the other side of the stream. That meant just one thing, and that was the cottontail had leaped across. Well, as I said before, the stream narrowed down here pretty much —not more than 3 feet wide at that point, so Bill and I wasted no time about hopping the stream ourselves. We no sooner came out of the thicket, than we caught sight of B're'r Rabbit scooting along the edge of the brush with the beagle dog yelping along not too far behind. Then the cottontail ducked back into the brush. We did too.

Now most fellows take the good with the bad in hunting, and not often do you hear of anyone running full steam after a rabbit; but for some unknown reason we did.

We had no sooner ducked back into the thicket when we caught sight of the cottontail—and the beagle—on the other side! And like fools, we hopped across too; we were sort of puffing by this time, and maybe we both thought of it at the same time that we were being fooled. We got to be pretty sure of it when that cottontail showed up on the other side of the stream again; if we followed him all the way, we'd have hopped over that river five times in about a hundred yards.

Well, the cottontail reverted to type, and we caught sight of him coming back our way. There was a lot of high marsh grass along part of the thicket, and his majesty with a confused beagle dog behind him came pounding along the edge of the grass, headed for a clump of willows and alders just ahead of us. He would be sure to see us before long, and we had it figured that he'd head for the lower end of the clump of bushes. Bill was in a better position than I was, and he laid in on the cottontail, waiting for him to make the sharp turn into the brush after he left the swale. The beagle was well out of the way, so there was no danger of hitting him when the .20 gauge let go. So, I was waiting to hear the shotgun shot, and I'd seen Bill shoot often enough to know that he'd knock over the critter.

But the shotgun never went off, and the cottontail ducked into the willows unharmed. I'd been watching the bunny and when I didn't hear the report of the .20 gauge, I looked quickly at Bill to see what was wrong. He was standing there sighting down the barrel of the .20 at the spot where the rabbit had disappeared with a silly smile on his moniker; slowly he lowered the gun and turned to me and said "Fran, do you realize that that rabbit made us race at top speed and hop the river three times? And we'd have hopped it five times if we hadn't gotten tired and out of wind. As I was looking down the sights at that darn critter I suddenly realized what saps he made out of us, and you know, I just couldn't pull the trigger."

We came out of that pasture lot without saying anyhing more, and we noticed the dog was awfully quiet too.

Somehow in looking back on that day, I'm glad Bill didn't fire; and while I'm looking back, I'm sure I couldn't either!

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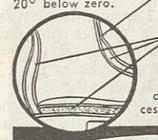

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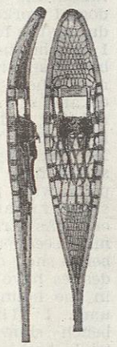

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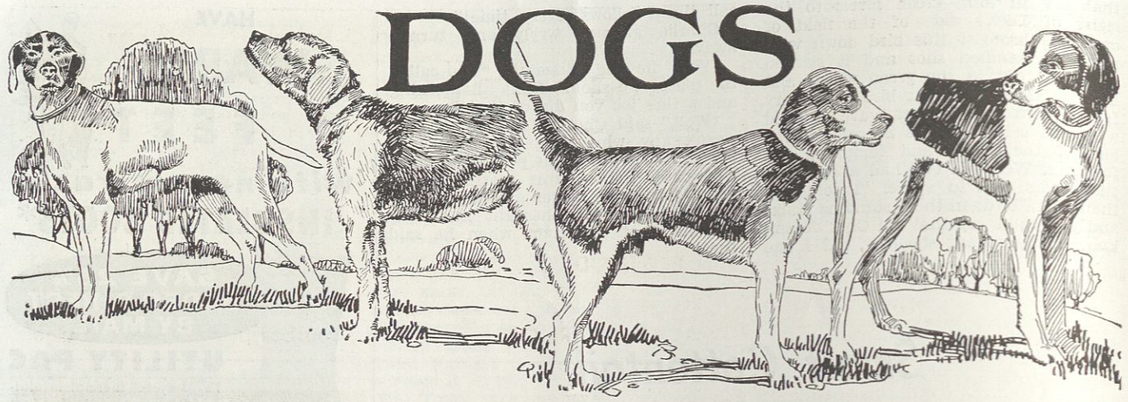

You, Too, Can Own A Bird Dog

By Carlos Vinson

THE first bird dog I ever owned was a "natural". I was lucky, because such things happen on an average of about twice in a bird hunter's lifetime. Fifty-odd bird dogs and plenty of gray hairs later, my score stands at three "naturals," which is already above the average. Forty-odd summers and winters are behind me, which leaves me with quite a few bird hunting years yet to go I sincerely hope, but I'm not counting on any more "naturals". That would be too much to hope for.

Yes, I raise and train my own bird dogs, and the fifty-odd that I have owned and trained or attempted to train during my twenty-five years of bird hunting experiences do not include the puppies I've raised and sold, and the dogs I worked for others during the few years that I was in the commercial bird dog training business. I have raised, trained and sold a few along the line, and these I have included in the fifty-odd. My bird dog experiences so far have been principally with pointers and setters, and gun dogs only. As strange as this may seem to some, my bench show and field trial desires have always been in the hound fancy column. I like foxhound bench shows and field trials best of all as far as that line of sport is concerned.

This young English setter has a covey of quail locked tight in a grassy cornfield.

As far as actual hunting is concerned, however, I am far more of a bird hunter than I am a fox hunter, or any other kind of a hound dog hunter as for that matter. In short, I am a dyed-in-the-wool bird hunter and bird dog fan—shooting dogs, that is.

By a "natural" I mean a pointer or setter that develops into a better-than-average gun dog with practically no training before it is eighteen months old. My first one was a pointer, a bitch, and she was doing all that a bird dog is supposed to do in my book by the time she was a year old. At nine months she was finding and pointing bobwhites like a veteran, and by the time she was a year old she was as near a perfect brush country gun dog as I have ever seen in action. She did it all, and had more hunting brains than a lot of people I've hunted with in my time. "Old Missy", as we called her, died from natural causes at the ripe old age of fourteen years. All I had to do to develop her into a finished gun dog was drop a few bobwhites over her. She did the rest herself. That was back in the old black powder days and, frankly, at the time I didn't know beans about bird dog training. Hunting and cane pole fishing were then the chief pastimes for country lads like myself, and by the time I was fourteen I had learned to handle my old .12 gauge single barrel well enough to down five or six bobwhites out of a box of black powder hulls.

My second "natural", "Queen", an English setter bitch, I bought for five bucks at weaning age some fifteen years and twenty-old bird dogs after "Missy." She was the runt of a litter of six, and by the time she was fourteen months old she was doing all that "Old Missy" had ever done with maybe a bit extra thrown in for good measure. She started doing it from the start, and killing a few bobwhites over her was all that it took to develop her into a, what I call, perfect gun dog. "Queen" had as few faults as any bird dog I've ever come in contact with. Because of the fact that I was moving to a large city for a while to be nearer to my work at the time and had no one to keep "Queen" for me, I was forced to sell her when she was five years old. I shipped her to a fellow up in one of the northern states where the principal bird hunting was for ringnecked pheasants, and the man told me several times that she was the best pheasant dog he had ever gone in the field with. All she had ever hunted before I sold her to the man was bobwhite quail, plus a few hunts for ruffed grouse—birds which she handled equally as well as she did the bobwhites.

Some years and bird dogs following "Queen" a friend gave me an English setter male puppy that was only eight weeks old. I named him "Jack", and early this year I laid him to rest at the ripe old dog age of thirteen years. He was a strong hunter on through his eleventh year.

The first day I took "Jack" bobwhite hunting he was as wild as a jackrabbit, and I just let him run to his heart's content and chase everything from stink birds to ground squirrels. He was one tired young setter that afternoon when I returned home.

I took him right back out the next day, just "Jack", no other dogs or hunters along, and the very first covey he located that second morning he froze on like he had been doing it for years. He was eleven months old at the time, and from there on developing him into a top flight gun dog was only a matter of killing a few birds over him. "Jack" did the rest. During his time I hunted him on bobwhites, ruffed grouse and a few times woodcock, and he handled all these varieties of game faultlessly.

Here's something that is really going to surprise a lot of you that read this. Neither of my three "naturals" came from registered stock. Perhaps they would have been entitled to registeration if records had been kept on their ancestors, I don't even know about that, but the fact remains that they were all three non-registered dogs. They were all three from backwoods country-raised gun dog stock, and even until today that's what I look for when I start out to buy a young bird dog for my own personal use. And here's something else. "Missy" and "Jack" were given to me, and "Queen" cost me five bucks. Compare this with the two highly pedigreed pointers I plunked down a hundred and fifty smackers for from the teat, only to give up on both of them as hopeless cases after two years of the most careful training I could possibly give them. It doesn't always work out that way, that I grant, but as far as real brush country gun dogs are concerned far more often than not it does.

I once read an article by a college professor who did quite a lot of hunting and outdoor writing on the side that appealed to me very deeply. The title of his article was, "Give Me A Forty Dollar Dog," and he was talking about bird dogs—pointers and setters. I fully realize that a lot of fellows will disagree with me on this, some with very good reasons, but it's the truth. For the average bird hunter that trains his own dogs, it is usually always best to go back in the sticks to buy a puppy, and the first advantage of this is the price will usually be somewhere between ten and twenty-five dollars. During normal times trained bird dogs can often be bought back in these nooks for forty and fifty bucks apiece.

I know, anyone buying such dogs probably won't scorch the woods raising and selling dogs from such stock because most of the dog buying public insists on registered stock, but in this piece we are discussing real honest-to-goodness gun dogs, the kind that us "average Joes" can get the best results from out in the hunting coverts. We are the guys that like to feel lumps in our game satchels now and then, and we do not possess sufficient mazuma to send our dogs off to some expensive dog training camp.

The higher pedigreed a pointer or setter is, as a general rule, the higher pitch the strain he is from has been bred to. In other words, high strung, entirely too much of that go-yonder vim for the average hunter, and to try to tone such dogs down to where they will work satisfactorily as brush country gun dogs for the average sportsman, well, it just usually isn't in the cards.

Please do not misunderstand me. In no way am I attempting to belittle our high bird dog bloodline standards. I am for maintaining these high standards just as much as anybody. Bird dog field trials very definitely have their place in our American way of life, and I for one say more power to those that go in for this fine sport and the blue blooded pointers and setters that make them possible.

I do say that pointers or setters directly out of active field trial stock, in most cases at least, can rarely be developed into satisfactory brush country gun dogs by the average fellow like myself. Practically all of them are too high strung to be toned down properly by average training, and to develop them into really good gun dogs for the average open hunting territory of today requires the services of an expert professional trainer which few of us are able to afford. Say a back country pup costs twenty bucks. Add to this about eight bucks per month for upkeep (which will include food and the usual anti-rabies and so on shots), and you have about what it takes to own and keep a bird dog below the blueblood bracket. I'm counting from the way I feed my own dogs— mostly prepared dog foods and table scraps, and certainly no steaks and very little hamburger. Bird dogs really don't need such fancy grub in order to do well. Let's say the owner of such a dog does his own training during his spare time, and if he has to drive out into the country to do it add five bucks or so per year to the cost for extra gas expense. Not counting the twenty bucks original cost, that will run around a hundred bucks per year that it costs to keep a dog of this type.

A bird dog pup in the blueblood class will normally cost anywhere from fifty to a hundred and fifty bucks at weaning age. If sent away to a reputable professional trainer (their prices vary,) the over-all cost will run up to several times more than the cost of owning and keeping a less dignified bird dog. As an example, a close friend of mine told me not long ago, that his highly pedigreed pointer, after counting original cost and the expense of an expert trainer until the dog was a finished gun dog, had cost him well over six hundred bucks by the time the dog was twenty-two months old. I am an outdoor writer by profession, my over-all annual earnings run just about on a par with most of the average fellows that I normally associate with, and I certainly don't make the kind of gravy it takes to do that sort of thing. It is all right for those able to afford it, and I am certainly not trying to kick the professional bird dog training business. I know some of the professionals personally, and without exception I have found them to be strictly on the level. They really know what they are doing, and I have yet to learn of one of them getting wealthy from his profession. It takes a lot of expense and hard work to build up the kind of kennel necessary to carry on such a business, and "know-how" galore. In most all cases the professionals are doing their work as cheaply as they can possibly afford, and they do a great job for those able to afford it and can't possibly do their own bird dog training.

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As I said earlier in this article, "naturals" are rather rare among bird dogs (pointers and setters), and varied amounts of training are necessary to develop most of them into satisfactory gun dogs for the average sportsman. The amount of training necessary depends on the individuality of the dog in most cases.

Basically, there's no difference in the training procedures for pointers and setters, and anyone with only a fair knowledge of bird dogs and bird hunting can do it. The old excuses of "I don't know how to train a bird dog," or "I don't have the time," are really not excuses for the average sportsman. It takes some patience in most cases, yes, plus the reasonable knowledge just mentioned, but the fellow that doesn't have those doesn't have very much business with a bird dog to start with.

I said at the beginning of this piece that my bird dog experiences covered a span of twenty-five years, but I shuold have said over thirty years because I was hunting with my father and his pointers by the time I was twelve years of age. I have raised and trained regular American pointers, English setters, Irish setters, Gordon setters, and German Short-haired pointers. Of these, I have found English setters the easiest and quickest to train. Scenting power advantages I will have to give American pointers my nod on, and careful hunting and retrieving qualities I rate English setters somewhat the highest. I have found little basic difference in Irish and Gordon setters, both somewhat harder to train and slower to get started than English setters or American pointers, but once they get it in their heads they are really more solid than the usual run of either of the others. For versatility, I'll have to give German short-hair pointers my nod. In short, the choice of breeds is largely a matter of personal preference. I've owned good and bad dogs from all the breeds so far mentioned.

And now we have added to our American list to choose from Swedish pointers, Hungarian VizsLas, German Drathaars, Weimaraners, and perhaps others, and as soon as some of these start getting out of the high bracket commercial stage I plan to try them. Right now, however, they are too steep for my penny pouch. I'm well satisfied that there's a lot of bird hunting class among these newly introduced breeds, but I seriously doubt if any of them will ever replace American pointers and English setters among the average bird hunters of America.

Although big thick books have been written on training bird dogs, developing a good gun dog is no complicated undertaking. As I have already said, almost any bird hunter can do it.

The first step, of course, is to select the puppy. Scout around a bit and find some country dweller that has a good stock of setters or pointers and uses them for bird hunting. Try to get the pup as soon after it is weaned as possible, and by all means worm the pup between ten and twelve weeks of age with a good standard brand of worming capsules (according to directions) available at most all drug stores. This is highly important. Be sure to worm that pup at the proper age.

I personally never did think too much of yard training, but at three to four months of age, if you are a town or city dweller, start taking the pup out into the country for field runs at least once a week. This is also highly important. This will familiarize the pup with stock and the usual country sounds and smells, and may well prevent various degrees of shyness later on. After the first few trips start taking a .22 rifle and some blank cartridges along and fire same near the pup a few times during each trip. All such as this I class as preliminary training, and it is important. Even if the pup later shows up as a "natural," this preliminary training will not hurt.

What I class as yard training is where anyone tries to do most of the preliminary training in a yard or small lot instead of out in the country in the fields. I much prefer the real outdoors preliminary training.

A pup should be given a name and that name should be used at all times when calling or giving the pup commands. A bird dog pup should be taught to come to its master and to obey commands otherwise during the preliminary training stage, and this is another thing that is highly important. Obedience training early in life will usually spell the difference between a "hard-head" and an easy to control dog later on.

If at all possible start working the pup on the game you plan to hunt with it between the ages of six and eight months. Let them get the general feel of almost everything they are supposed to do as gun dogs well in advance of their first hunting season, and if they have what it takes in them the rest should be comparatively easy.

By all means try to kill the first game bird the pup points stanchly, and if the pup bolts or breaks to shot and wing don't let it worry you too much. However, don't let them get too far with such faults. Use a check cord (about 25 feet of window sash cord snapped on to the dog's collar ring) and let the pup drag the cord until it makes the next point. Get hold of the free end of the cord and then ease ahead and flush the bird in the usual manner, and when the pup lunges forward jerk him over backward. Avoid harsh scolding and severe physical abuse at all times during the training course, but be firm. After the pup decides that it cannot chase the bird or birds, it doesn't hurt to pet it a bit, but do not overdo this. Bolting and breaking to shot and wing can be cured in the same series of operations in the manner just described, and it usually doesn't take more than three or four times of being yanked over backward to cure them. Say "Hold Joe" or "Hold Luo" in a firm but not too loud and harsh a voice as the jerking is done.

The best medicine for rabbit chasing is a keen switch. Catch them in the very act and give them a keen switching, and again three or four doses should be sufficient in most cases.

The best way to train pups to hunt dead or crippled birds is to keep them working close around where a bird has fallen until they find it. Most young dogs will try their best to wander off and start hunting live birds again, but bring them back in and make them hunt in circles close around where the bird has fallen. Keep saying "hunt dead" as the young dog circles, and after they have found a few most of them will get interested and know what they are supposed to do when the "hunt dead" command is given. This part of the training should come after the pup has been taught steadiness to shot and wing and not to bolt (bolting is breaking away and giving chase to the birds after they flush.)

The next step is teaching the pup to retrieve. This will come to a good share of pointers and setters naturally as they learn to hunt and find dead birds, but if it doesn't a good way is to toss out a freshly found dead bird a few yards and coax the pup to go get it and bring it to you. This is usually not at all hard to do, and if the young dog insists on holding on to the bird or tries to chew it get hold of a forepaw and squeeze it until the pup drops the bird. Pet the pup a bit, and then let it pick up the dead bird again. Use the forepaw squeezing process again if necessary, and repeat the process at intervals until the pup is handling and retrieving dead birds tenderly.

There has a lot more that could be said about gun dog training, but what I have just said includes all the basic principles involved. In other words, by following these few simple rules, almost anyone can train a good gun dog if the pup is from the right stock to start with.

A lot of sportsmen miss out on a lot of thrilling sport because they believe that bird dogs are too expensive and that training them is too complicated an undertaking for them. Truth of the matter is, anyone that is able to own any kind of a hunting dog is able to own a bird dog. Any average sportsman can own and train one, and they are no more trouble to keep than any other kind of a dog of similiar size. A good bird dog adds a lot of pleasure to almost any kind of bird hunting, and they definitely mean more game in hunters satchels. It all adds up to the fact that, "You, Too, Can Own A Bird Dog.".

"One of Those Nights"

By Willie B. Hutcheson

AS we sat in the swing on the porch of our house, my grandfather told me a story of one of his 'coon hunts. This is the story he told me:

The night was warm, the stars were shining, and the night was bright as day. It was the first night of 'coon season. My brother "Bee" and myself, accompanied by our two hounds, Judge and Jack, were going to get a 'coon or burst!

It was a good night and our hopes were high as we went through our clover pasture and headed for the woods. Jack and Judge were running along in front of us trying to find the scent of a "ring-tail." We reached the woods a little after 8 p. m., and had gone only a short distance into the woods when old Jack started barking on the trail of a 'coon. We heard him tree after about 30 minutes of hard trailing.

We had to cross a creek and climb through lots of vines and brush before reaching Jack and his treed 'coon, which was hidden up high in a vine-covered cyprus tree. Finally, after searching the tree in vain from the ground, I climbed the tree and held a light on the 'coon while "Bee" shot him. He was dead when he hit the ground.

All the time we were chasing after Jack, we had not heard from Judge. Suddenly, however, we could hear his deep bass voice ringing throughout the woods, and Jack immediately took off at break-neck speed toward him.

When we arrived, both dogs were raising quite a ruckus. And we soon saw why—they had not one, but two animals treed together! We immediately shot out the larger of the two, which turned out to be a 'coon. Not sure of the latter's identity, we tried to get each other to climb the tree and find out. "Bee" swore he wouldn't climb the tree, so there was nothing left for me to do but see for myself.

When I got close to the animal, I saw that it was an ordinary black house cat only he was the biggest and prettiest cat I had ever seen. He was coal black, and his hair was standing on end. I knew mother would like to have him so I asked "Bee" to catch the dogs and hold them while I got down with the cat.

Jack and Judge obviously didn't like the idea of the cat in my arms, and they made a leap for it but missed. The cat ripped my hand nearly to the bone with its sharp claws. I yelled a curse on all cats and slung him off of me. The cat landed on my brother and sunk his long, white teeth into "Bee's" leg. He fell to the ground with the cat and dogs fighting and rolling around on top of him. I had to laugh in spite of my hand as I saw them thrashing around on the ground, and "Bee" adding to the commotion by yelling, "Get these damn animals offa me!"

The cat was a good fighter, but it was a losing battle as he was no match for two hounds.

We took our two 'coons and hounds and went home. This is just one of our 'coon hunts and they nearly all make good stories to tell, but I will always remember this one in particular as "one of those nights."

Child Is Not Born With Fear of Dogs

A grownup who is fearful of dogs is a pitiful sight but even sadder is the case of the child who is afraid of dogs—or other animals, says the Gaines Dog Research Center, New York.

Children are not born with such fear, but they usually acquire it from grownups already so afflicted, it states. Very often the mother, by pursuing too rigid a caution program, is responsible.

Child experts are agreed that a fear of dogs in youngsters can be eliminated with time and attention to the problem. The child must be made to understand that there are all kinds of dogs, some gentle, others rough. He should be taken near a dog known to be gentle and accustomed to children, and encouraged to pet and play with him. An even better method is to get him a dog of his own, selecting a specimen of the smaller breeds to give the youngster the feeling of comfort and confidence in his pet.

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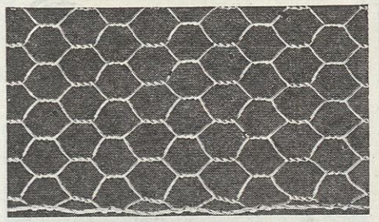

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The Business Of Fur Farming

By Roy D. Harman

FUR Farming is the newest branch of Animal Husbandry, having reached a scale of considerable importance in the Fur Trade, only during and since the Nineteen Twenties. Foxes and Mink have demonstrated their worth as ranch bred furs. Others are yet in the experimental stage.

In the United States, Canada and the Scandinavian Nations thousands of fur farms have been established during that time. Many never made any money and quit. Many others have found it a means of making a good living, combining interesting outdoor work with fair profits. A modest number of fur farmers have made substantial fortunes. Business cycles and fashion changes have contributed to the prosperity or failure of some. But the prime essential to success in fur farming has been personal competence, the ability to do the job right and the will to stay with it.

Most fur farmers are family sized outfits where the owner and operator with his family and some hired employees do all the work. A few fur farms are large enough to employ several dozen people.

Today 70% of all fur business dollarwise in the U. S. is in Mink fur. Ranch Mink including Mutations in over a dozen color phases amounts to 90% of all mink business.

Some fur farmers have been favored with veterinary or other scientific training that has been of much help to them. A far larger number have had moderate schooling. Most of them like outdoor life, hunting and fishing. A large percentage started their fur careers as farm boy trappers. In general most successful fur farmers must have or be:

1. A judge of fur. He must know what constitutes quality in fur. He must be able to quickly tell the difference between an exceptional animal and a fair one. He must keep informed as to what the market is willing to pay for. He must know the relative importance of the various characteristics of fur.

2. He must understand the nature and psychology of his animals keeping in mind that comfort and contentment are always important to the well-being of any animals. He needs to be able to tell when his animals are thriving and when they are just coasting or making no progress. His goal should be steady improvement every year.

3. He needs to have a working knowledge of genetics in order to know how various characteristics, desirable or undesirable will probably be transmitted in any contemplated mating of animals. Fortunately such information is available to all who are willing to read.

4. He needs to know considerable of the diseases and parasites his fur-bearers may encounter. Suitable methods of control of most of these have been developed. Through fur farmer associations and commercial sources much of this information is available.

5. Nutritionist. His animals will not do their best for reproduction or fur quality unless they are fed properly. The difference in pelt value between animals fed right and those fed an inadequate or poorly balanced diet amounts to several dollars per skin and easily means the difference between profit and loss.

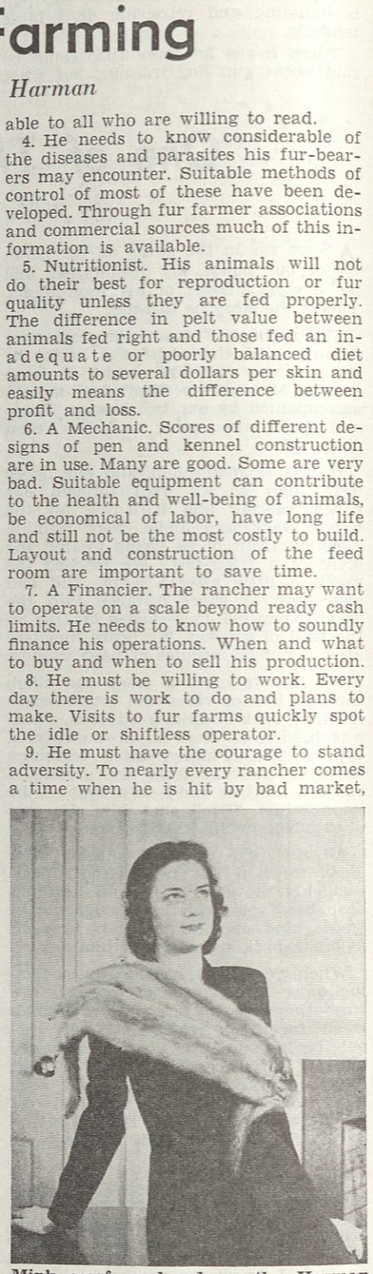
6. A Mechanic. Scores of different designs of pen and kennel construction are in use. Many are good. Some are very bad. Suitable equipment can contribute to the health and well-being of animals, be economical of labor, have long life and still not be the most costly to build. Layout and construction of the feed room are important to save time.

7. A Financier. The rancher may want to operate on a scale beyond ready cash limits. He needs to know how to soundly finance his operations. When and what to buy and when to sell his production.

8. He must be willing to work. Every day there is work to do and plans to make. Visits to fur farms quickly spot the idle or shiftless operator.

9. He must have the courage to stand adversity. To nearly every rancher comes a time when he is hit by bad market, material losses or other trouble. Some of the oustanding fur farmers of the world have at some time encountered serious trouble. The ability to defeat such troubles separates the men from the boys.

10. He should be a balanced individual. Readiness to cooperate with his employees, his business associates, other fur farmers and with the purchasers of his products are invaluable. He must never let adversity deflate him too much. And when prosperous years arrive, he should remember and provide for the fact that they probably will not last forever.



Mink scarf produced on the Harman Fur Farms, Christiansburg, Va.

Tarpon Baffle Me

(Continued from Page 11)

Guides tell me that's why I lose so many fish, because my rig isn't strong enough to set the hooks properly. But I'm going to stick with my rig. One of these days the law of averages (the famous excuse of all anglers) will catch up with me, and I'll land one of the silver kings.

Artificials are also popular with the run of the mill tarpon fishermen you find on the Texas coast. Somehow I prefer natural bait. Your chances of landing a fish are better on the artificals with the gang hooks. The favorite lures are the big Heddon king camp with the metal band around its belly, and the Shakespeare wiggle diver. The Heddon lure is the more sturdy of the two, and will take a lot more punishment. Large silver spoons are also popular.

But I've found that although your chances of landing a fish are better on the artificials, you'll get more strikes on the natural bait. And that's what I'm after—more strikes.

When you're fishing for tarpon, you'll many times catch a nice string of edible fish. In fact, the trend in recent years has been toward fishing for kingfish, spanish mackerel and other fish that are suitable for eating as well as sporty. Tarpon are strictly a sport fish. Their tough flesh and strong taste is something not even the toughest stomach can endure.

Because of the fact that tarpon cannot be eaten, the Port Aransas Rod and Reel Club has recently been trying a unique experiment. Most fishermen, after they've caught their tarpon and weighed and measured him and had their picture taken, will throw the fish away, thus depriving other anglers of sport. The Rod and Reel Club has issued monel fish tags and certificates of catches. Guides now, at every opportunity, tag tarpon and release them. The fishermen receive one of the certificates certifying the fish was caught and released.

On rare occasions you may catch a sailfish or dolphin while trolling for tarpon. Both of these fish are top-notch jumpers, and I've always had an inherent weakness for fish that jump. But dolphin are mighty scarce along the Texas coast, and sailfish are extra hard to catch.

A sail has an annoying habit of slapping a lure with his beak and then examining it before gobbling it down. A tarpon fisherman may actually have several strikes from sails without being aware of it. To successfully catch sailfish, you have to go for them exclusively, using special gear and methods.

When you're fishing for tarpon, you may see many of the silver fish and never be able to get a strike. This is a very frustrating situation. I know. Tarpon have rudimentary lungs and must come up from time to time to breath. They can be seen, but that doesn't mean they'll strike. But many times it is comforting to know they are there. Especially after fishing for eight or nine consecutive hours under a broiling Texas sun without a strike.

When they're feeding, it's an entirely different story. Tarpon have a characteristic way of feeding. They lunge out of the water and lash at the surface. When you find them doing that, strikes come fast and furious. But catch them. Well, that's something altogether different.

I have been told there is no hard and fast set of rules when you go after tarpon. There is no guarantee they'll be biting today, guides have told me as we headed out before dawn. All you can do is try every thing you can possibly think of, and then you probably won't catch a tarpon.

I watch other fishermen and try to copy their methods, especially if they are catching fish.

I probably work harder at the sport than any other man. And it is very disgusting to see others getting action, when I'm not.

For instance, one day my partner on a charter boat was getting strikes by the dozen and he caught and released three nice tarpon, one of them being a six-foot-ten monster. I didn't get a single strike, although my rig and bait was an exact replica of his. I still haven't figured it out.

Fishing for these big fish isn't as big an expense as most people are led to believe. A charter boat out of Port Aransas costs $30 a day for two fishermen. If three want to go together, the price jumps to $35. Three can fish adequately from a charter boat, but any more than that will make things crowded.

I'll admit it gets pretty disgusting, going out day after day, and not catching fish. It is especially discouraging after you've fished hard all day in the Gulf to come home and find that your best buddy caught a nice tarpon right off a pier. I had that experience recently.

But I've found the silver king worthy of his name. He is a tremendous battler, he is a terrific aerial artist, and he is tempermental enough to make you sweat and toil to hook in the first place. That's what makes fishing for him exciting. That's why I'll keep going back until I boat my first tarpon.

I have a hunch this is going to be my year. I sure hope so!

In The Chibougamau Region

(Continued from Page 6)

colored and black-and-white pictures he has taken on his trips to the Chibougamau region. They are fairly breath-taking in their portrayal of this spectacular wilderness country and the mammoth fish that lurk in the lakes and rivers. It's a revelation of what this continent of ours possesses in the way of natural beauty and prospects for extraordinary sport, still undiminished, fortunately, by civilization. It proves, too, that an outdoor life is the most interesting, eventful, and exciting that can be spent by man.

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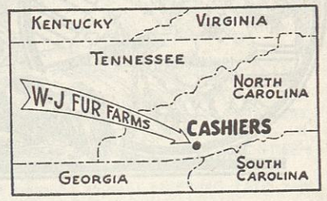

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Experiences of a Utah Trapper

By Bruce W. Olsen

I have lived in the same little town, Emery, Emery Co., in Southern Utah, all my life. I have lived and worked on a farm and in the out doors ever since I can remember. I am a boy like all other country boys, always investigating that which is new. I always did like to get up in the morning, jump on the horse and ride out into the mountains and watch the wildlife that was there; to study the animals under the rocks and around in the trees and forests. For they had life that appealed to me. From that time on I have studied animals, their habits and the way they live to the extent that I find more joy among them than anywhere else. That feeling of contentment and the joy of satisfaction.

When I was very young, we moved from town to the homestead, so as to keep it according to the law. As we filled the time required, we moved out of the old one room log-cabin and back into town.

One day as Dad, Cecil, (my brother two years older than I), two other fellows and myself, were riding for cows on the homestead when we ran onto an old trap that had been buried in the cow trail for quite some time. Ater checking it over, it was still in fairly good condition. Although rusted by the weather here and there, we picked it up and took it with us. A couple days later, as we rode down to the creek to give our horses a drink, we found an old dead coyote in a trap near the stream. It had been there quite some time, maybe a year, because all that was left was skin and bones, so I got off and pulled the trap from its front foot and tied it on behind my saddle.

The author holding the pelt of a gray fox. Pelts in the background are those of some bobcats caught during the season of 1953.

From that time, I have many times thought to myself, "That would really be great if I could catch a coyote like that. The thrill of having for myself, a wild animal."

Another time as my brother and I, along with a couple friends, were walking down a dry wash on the homestead, we ran across, what we thought to be a coyote track. On back to town we went and got one of the traps we had found and an old dead chicken that had been thrown on top of the cow shed. When we got to the place of the track, we managed to set the trap, with the help of a couple long poles laid across the trap springs. Then we hung the chicken in an old tree above the trap in hopes for a big catch.

After two weeks we returned with high expectations, but of little find. With so great efforts I gave up coyote trapping and went back to trapping of squirrels and rabbits. However at that time, I didn't really know or understand the plan and art of trapping of such cunning animals as the coyote.

Things went along as expected until one day as I neared the ranch stackyard, my brother came running out from under the shed calling to me that I had a coyote or something big in one of my traps there. The way he was carrying on you would think I had a mountain lion or something like that. He was jumping up and down and running all around the place. I couldn't tell if he was afraid or just excited. We went back under the shed to see. I had one of my number 3 traps set along with my rabbit traps, and a big badger had walked into the No. 3 in attempting to dig out a squirrel in the bank there. It was a good thing he didn't land in one of the rabbit traps or I would of had one less trap.

Through this heart lifting experience I decided to try coyotes again. Though I had only a few traps, I would have to take special care in setting them out and to set them in the most profitable places. I had to catch something.

One day as I was riding along the Quickupa Creek looking for a good place to set a trap I saw a cottontail dash up and over the bank on the opposite side of the creek. I went over and investigated his way over and found a small, unnoticable trail leading over the bank and into the brush on the other side. I closely examined the trail and found what I thought to be a coyote track, so here I set my trap.

For about two weeks I expected the set from the opposite bank, but nothing had happened, 'till one day when I looked and saw that a few small bushes that had been near the set had been torn away. Down the bank and across the creek I ran and found no animal! and no trap! "There goes my trapping out of the window," I said to myself. I had had something big and strong in that trap. I examined where the trap had been and found large claw marks in the bank and knew then it wasn't a coyote, but some big, strongfooted bobcat. He had caught fast and had gotten away with my trap by breaking the trap chain. I searched the creek up and down and then the patch of rabbit brush on top of the bank, but found not a sign of a bobcat or even my trap, so gave up the search.

I wanted more traps, but couldn't afford any, for I had no extra money other than that needed for school and I didn't want to depend upon my parents to support me in my trapping, so I went and talked to a government trapper, by the name of Durmas Jensen, who lived in my home town. He and I were pretty good friends and he often gave me a few good hints in regards to trapping. Not all will do that. Under these circumstances he loaned me a few old traps that he had and said that I could use them until the next Summer.

With five No. 2 dubble, long springs and three No. 3s, I really began, although Summer was over and it was late Fall before I got the traps set out. I was taking FFG at this time and thought of trying the "Dirt Hole" set as explained in one of the issues.

Unexpectedly, Winter set in earlier than usual. A lot of snow fell before I could get in to gather out my traps. I couldn't make it by foot, so I saddled up one of the horses and tried it that way, but it was no use, even then, for drifts had blown up on the level and the holes and cracks in the ground were filled in and it made the ground look level there. This was too big a gamble. Breaking a horse's leg on account of a trap, so I had to let a couple traps go until Spring.

The snow continued and things got pretty cold and stiff, including my moving parts, but nevertheless the days rolled by. Soon April came and old Mother Sun began to roll back from the South, bringing with her the flowers and the sweet voice of the meadow Lark. The long white winter carpet began to wear away as the warm fingers of Mother Sun were laid upon it. And out through this melting snow came tiny, tender shoots of new green grass that grew higher and stronger each day as it felt the warmth of the day before it. The hillsides and the meadows received new life at the opening of each, new, warm day.

Finally the day came. Most of the snow had disappeared and the trail across the homestead had dried out enough to travel by horseback. I figured now would be the time to take a day off and ride out and see if my traps were still to be found or if they had been washed away by the high, Spring floods. I had them both set in and around the Wildcat Wash section of the homestead, about a two hour ride by horseback across what is called the Blue Trail. It used to be an old wagon road when the country around there was first settled, but now it has been deserted and is used only for trailing cows and horses.

This country is quite a desolate country with a lot of sage brush, rabbit brush and what we call greaswood brush. It is very ledgy country with many dry washes and barren flats, although we seem to make a fair living, enough to keep us going.

When tourists come through this country they don't stay very long. When they do, they usually ask the question, "How in the world can anyone make a living here?" We just grin and tell them it's pretty hard, but nevertheless we live and then give them this thought to think on as they continue on their way, "It's so hot and dry around here in the Summer time, even the Jack Rabbits have to carry waterbags with them."

Saturday came, and early that morning, I awoke and was up, saddled up the horse and was gone before anyone else had opened an eye. It was a little cool and snappy that morning, but just the way a guy likes it on a day that is set for something like this. He can feel Old Mother Nature or Jack Frost, kissing him on the cheeks and nose and stepping on his corns and toes. When it is this way, it is great to get out and see the wild animals do their last hunt through the low lands before retiring again to their dens for another day.

After a couple hours' ride through scrub pine and small Juniper, Red Cedar, I ended out on top of a high ridge, where the cool morning breeze was blowing up from the canyon below. The morning frost was still lingering on the new blades of grass at my feet as I stood there gazing down into the shadowed streambed below. Although not yet in site of the traps, I had to stop and admire such a beautiful spectacle as it was there, when the new morning sun was sending her bright warm beams deeper and deeper into the long quiet canyon below. Far on the other side I could hear the cry of a hawk as she left her nest of young in the rocky ledge to search the fields for their breakfast, that they might also grow and hunt for themselves. Although I was there only a few minutes, it seemed that I lived in another new life that is not felt by all.

I returned to the trail and on down the winding trail to the bottom of the canyon in the direction of my traps. I located my first one under an overhanging ledge near a dry sand bed without much trouble. It had been set off and was covered partly with sand and mud. I pulled the stake and rode on to the next dry wash, where I had the second. As I neared the spot, I noticed a hump of material near where I had the staked trap. As I rode closer I could see fur strips here and there around the trap and on the bushes. Yes sir, I had something, a bobcat, my first real bobcat and killer. Nevertheless, it was dead and was about rotted away. I would say it had been dead about five or six months anyway, but I had one. This was the goal I had been working for, trying to reach it for as long as I could remember.

I pulled my knife from my pocket in attempt to scalp this weather-beaten animal, but it was in vain, for its scalp had dried solid to the skull and it was impossible to cut it loose, I wanted that scalp, because it would add a big six dollars to my pocket book. After another try, I gave it up and cut off the top of the skull or the upper part of the head.

I replaced the "dirt hole" set, and with pride mounted my horse and rode back to town with my first real catch. The thrill that I will never forget as long as I live.

A week later as I was riding for cows, I detoured from my regular route, and dropped down into where I had this trap set to see if anything had happened. When I broke over the edge of the hillside and looked down in the direction

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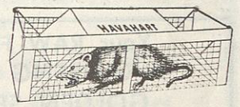

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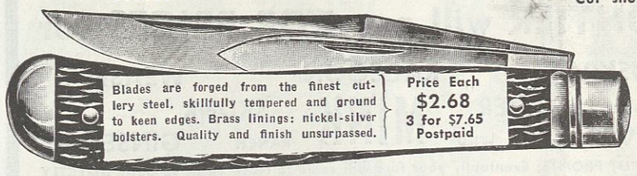
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of the trap, I saw something move behind a small rabbit bush. I tied my horse to an old dead cedar and worked my way to the bottom of the hillside where I had seen the movement. Sure enough, it was a cat, crouched as close to the ground as possible, peering up at me out of the corners of its eyes as I walked past it. I wondered then how I was going to kill it, because I had no gun with me. I looked around and found a long heavy birch stick and figured I could hit it over the head, but soon as I picked up the stick and started toward him, he made a jump in the direction away from me. When he came to the end of the trap chain, it popped him in the air like a big bull whip. Then I could see he was only caught by one toe. I knew then that I had to do something else and do it quick or I wouldn't have a bobcat. He was standing at the end of the chain hissing and snarling with every breath, showing his big white teeth that had probably ripped many lives to destruction. I could just about understand him as to say, "If I could only get hold of him."

I found a good sized rock, picked it up and started toward the cat again, but not so close that he could reach me if he made up his mind to shake hands my way. I settled down and then let go. Wham! The rock hit him in the head and he dropped to the ground and I had him. This one brought me ten dollars, six for bounty and four from the fur.

During the following Summer ('52), I was away working and didn't have much opportunity to do trapping. Then I attended the Branch Agriculture College in Cedar City, Utah, for my second year. This college is located 190 miles from my home town and it was somewhat difficult to travel on week-ends and make it pay off, but Christmas vacation, that year, was two weeks, so I figured that would be a good time to set out a line of traps. I bought a few more traps there in Cedar City and treated them so as to be ready to go during the holiday vacation.

When the Christmas Vacation came, I set to work. First I rode the country for miles in every direction, from morning until just about dark, locating the trails of these big cats, finding their trails and runways through the canyons and over the cedar covered ridges while the snow was deep and it was easy to find their 'trails. Where the snow was too rough going I would have to walk, but nevertheless I combed the country from head to toe. Then I prepared places that traps could be set when the snow melted enough that there would be dry ground where I was to set the traps. Then I would know exactly where to go when the snow had melted.

Things went fine during these two weeks. By the time the holidays were over I had a trapline covering about fifteen to twenty miles, which was alternated now and then as things developed.

Now that I had a trapline out, I had to take care of it, so decided to come home every week-end with some of my school buddies. Then I could take care of them and help pay my way through school if things went as expected. There was a big chance that I could make a profit, because a round-trip ticket with these friends was only four dollars and one bobcat or coyote per week would bring me six dollars, so I gave it a try.

The first week-end brought nothing. Things were still pretty wet during the day time and at night everything froze down and that made it hard to make any progress, because at night time is when the cats are on the run.

The next week-end I bagged two of those cats. The first of the two was the biggest caught all through the season. He was a big boy, coming mighty close to forty pounds. Rolling with fat. No telling whose lambs he had brought down or how many fawn or pheasant he had killed, for he sure didn't get that fat from sucking eggs.

I would like to relate an experience I had one time concerning these cats killing game birds. It was in the Spring of '53. I located a good trail in the bottom of a canyon, where bobcats were most likely to travel. I set the trap on the trail about twenty feet from a small stream, which was about three feet wide. I never did think much of staking down bobcat traps, because of the terrific fight they put up when caught. And if they are staked down hard and fast they might pull out or break something, so I tied this trap to a small, loose tree stump there by the side of the trail. The first cat caught there dragged the stump down into the stream. The water covered the log about half and then the cat laid himself along side the part sticking above the water. He blended so well with the surroundings that it was almost impossible to distinguish him from his surroundings. I will never forget the time I had trying to find him. I couldn't tell where he had dragged the stump because of so much grass there. I figured he couldn't be too far away, but after searching up and down the trail I finally located him there at the edge of the stream, sitting on the bank by the half submerged stump.

Another week-end as I came down the canyon, I could see the stump had been dragged away like the first one and I figured this cat had done the same trick. When I came around in sight of the stream, sure enough, there he was standing on the opposite bank in my trap. The moment I came in sight, he saw me and dropped to the ground like he was shot. I walked on down the trail until I came near him. He was in about the exact spot of the first one. After I shot him, I walked over to pick him up and when I got there I noticed feathers scattered around where he had been caught. I examined them to see what it had been. Speaking of cats killing birds, this boy had caught, killed and eaten a hen pheasant while caught in the trap. If they can do it this easy while in a trap, what can they do out?

It came the last of May, 53 and school was out for the Summer. I had a job with the Nevada National Forest for the Summer, so it was time to pull stakes again for a while. So that ended my best and most enjoyable trapping season.

I would like to show my appreciation to the FUR-FISH-GAME for the success I have had during that season in bagging eighteen (18) bobcats, one (1) coyote, one (1) gray fox, and about twelve (12) badgers. With these bringing one hundred and fourteen dollars bounty, plus a little for the pelts, it helps a fellow along quite a bit. My trapping days consisted of only one day per week. I would come home Friday evenings, do my trapping Saturday, go to church and then go back to school on Sundays. Therefore with the information and help I have received from FFG I have done this good. With the information and lures received through FFG, I know it has helped me have such a successful season.

I brought one cat in alive and had him for five weeks. Then he broke out and took for the hills. I still have part of him though, the two middle toes from the left front foot. He has my brand and I hope he waits, for he is out there somewhere.

In the evenings after a day like one of these, Dad would sit down by the warm, crackling fire and tell me his stories and trapping experiences when he was a boy, relating the times when you could go out in the mornings, sit up on some high ridge and wait for the coyotes and cats to come out of the brushland after their morning hunts. And how they would wait for them and then bring down a couple every morning. How they would see them off and on every day or so, running here and there as by their will and desires. But now you've got to look mighty hard to find one. There aren't many of them left, (the coyote) in these parts. Very seldom you see them around and when you do, they are gone in no time flat.

It is seldom that you get the opportunity to hear that call of the coyote, and when you do, it sends a shot of something up and down your spine. A feeling that cannot be explained. One that must be experienced to be appreciated.

Here when the work is all done in the Fall, the trees begin to drop their colored leaves of pink, red and gold. This is the time when things are quiet and peaceful again. Then out in the wild where not many men live, you wait, watch and listen as a soft light sleet of snow begins to fall like soft, light feathers upon the ground around you. It isn't cold and there is no wind, but a sweet silent feeling of rest. Then off in the distance, among the foot hills, unseen by you or me, but felt in our hearts and souls, comes that soft, perfect, and distinct answer, a coyote's lonely call that lasts only now, but lives forever.

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Price $3 including bottle our best mid-winter mink lure. Money back if unsatisfactory. One mink pelt will pay for several books. Nobody knows it all and there are a lot of good mink trappers. We don't claim to be the BEST, but we do claim to be one of 'em.

J. CURTIS GRIGG **HOPKINTON, IOWA**
(The Old Mink Catcher)

Notes From A Trappers Diary

(Continued from Page 15)

where the stove pipe emerged to the outside. The dry waterproofed canvas was blazing in earnest, and by the time I had untangled myself from the sleeping bag, a hole of large proportions had burned, exposing the snow covered poles that formed the false roof. Ignoring the searing flames, I extinguished them in short order with my bare hands, but not until a full one-third of the covering was reduced to ashes. A large tarp that I had intended using at one of the shelters was used to cover the gaping hole in the tent. Fortunately my hands were not burned very badly, and I considered myself lucky to have awakened in time to have averted a possible tragedy. I am not a deep sleeper, a factor which may have saved my life.

The wilderness trapper must be equipped physically and mentally to overcome obstacles that one of lesser knowledge would find unsurmountable. Alone in these isolated sections of our great land, following this rugged and hazardous occupation, the trapper must be ever vigilant in order to be able to survive the elements and escape serious injury or possible death. A series of mistakes can make the season's work disagreeable and unprofitable. I believe that beginners in this game should work for at least one season with some trapper who has had extensive experience in winter trap lines in wilderness areas. Much practical knowledge can be attained from such an arrangement. I have spent several enjoyable winters with amateurs who were ambitious and anxious to learn the fundamentals required for this type of work.

One fall a young partner and I trapped in semi-wilderness till Christmas time for 'rats, mink, fox, 'cat and coyotes that were plentiful along the creeks and rivers, lakes and lava beds near Crescent, Oregon. This was the early '20's and long fur was still of some value.

Roy Burns, my trapping pal, had been raised in Missouri, and his ability to trap these animals was outstanding, especially 'rats, mink and fox. He was a very rugged individual in his early twenties with seemingly unlimited vigor. He was allotted the streams and lakes, while I trapped the lava beds and jack pine pumice flats for coyotes, badger and bobcats. Needless to say, we had a very successful season, and by Christmas time we had gleaned a very large amount of fur.

I had an old 1925 Dodge touring and had built a station wagon type body on its sturdy frame. Roy used a 1921 model T Ford touring with top and side curtains. It was a late fall, the winter snows

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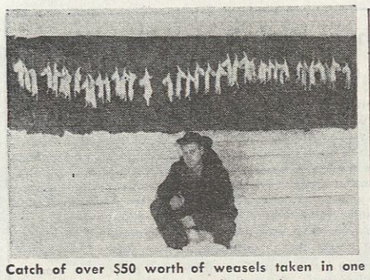

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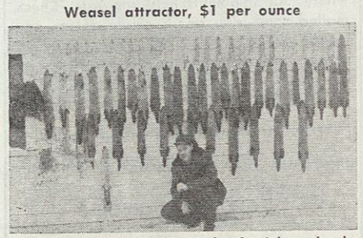

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Fox Attractor	1.00	" "
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holding off till the holidays. This enabled us to cover a large territory and I was able, in some degree, to give my very jovial and ambitious pard some lessons in trapping coyotes and 'cats, as his experience in this was very limited.

We had planned running a marten and fox 'line in a wilderness area in the Cascades. Two California trappers moved in the cabins we intended using, packing in their provisions and traps in September. As no other territory was available, we had to content ourselves trapping in semi-wilderness.

It was Roy's one desire, above all else, to spend a winter in deep snow country, in quest of marten, an animal that he had never seen. His disappointment was, therefore, deep felt.

Much to our joy, a chain of circumstances during the next few days after the end of our venture changed this state of affairs. While indulging in a few rounds of hootch at the local bar, a stranger made his appearance, and, of course, his presence caused the proprietor of the establishment to be suspicious at once. Being the days of prohibition, and he so flagrantly breaking said laws, old Ike began pumping this character at once. He convinced the bartender and everyone present that he wasn't a "revenooer", and after a few shots of fire water was soon in conversation with anyone who would listen.

Old Ike commented, "That bird has diarrhea of the mouth," which was, indeed, the truth.

He cornered Roy and told him an incredible tale of how he and his partner, recently from California, had outfitted a trapline in a wilderness area for a marten trapping expedition. They had hauled a large amount of traps and supplies to the road's end, where a packer with several horses was waiting to load it on el forcases and distribute the conglomeration to three different cabins. This being done, he collected his fee, leaving the "dudes", as he called them, to their own resources.

At this point, Roy realized that this character and his partner were the ones who had beat us to the draw, thus preventing us from outfitting said cabins at the proper time and running marten lines in this same territory. My partner, always the good listener, clammed up while this would-be trapper unfolded his tale of woe.

Neither had ever spent a winter in the wilderness, and were definitely not woodsmen. They had trapped considerable in rough desert country, but had never experienced deep snows. It was a foolish venture which almost ended in disaster. By keeping to blazed forest service fire trails, the traps were strung after a fashion, many being set in ground cubbies. After the first heavy snow in November, half of their line was lost, and great difficulty was encountered following the low trap line blazes.

Their snow shoes and clothing were inadequate, causing much discomfort. The climax of this fool-hardy venture occurred when they both became lost in a mountain blizzard shortly before Christmas. Fortunately, however, by following a stream down the mountain for several days, they arrived at a small town near Eugene, Oregon, more dead than alive. Wet to the skin, half starved and their clothing in tatters, these would-be marten trappers were generously cared for by the kind hearted populace till such time as they could wire for money which was sorely needed.

The only food consumed on this harrowing trip was a snowshoe rabbit and three grouse shot with a belt pistol and broiled over smoky camp fires. This character explained that his partner was in Portland having his frost-bitten feet treated in a hospital, while he, the erstwhile trapper, was headed for sunny California.

Roy excitedly called me over and said, "This bird says that he will sell the whole kit and kaboodle up there in the sticks for $50. What say we pay him off and take over their 'lines?"

I was rather dubious, and explained to my partner that it was late in the season for such a venture, but he was so insistent that I at last gave in to the proposition. We paid the man, received a bill of sale, sending him rejoicing on his way with at least enough money to return to his more familiar haunts.

Roy was elated over the prospects of at last realizing his dream of a wilderness marten trap line. However, I couldn't share his enthusiasm, but consented more or less for his special benefit.

Jan. 2, 1927—Left our fall camp on Little River headed for tall timber, pulling a toboggan heavily loaded. Made 7 miles breaking trail thru deep wet snow. Set up tent and gas stove. Tired & sleepy. Cloudy this eve.

Jan. 3,—5 miles of rough going in a snow storm. Set up tent in spruce thicket near creek. Very tired. The toboggan pulls like a freight train. Roy had groin cramps, and has a blister on one of his toes.

Jan. 4.—Cleared last nite and turned cold. Going was fair. Made 9 miles today. Camped by a large lake. Should reach lost cabin tomorrow. Saw fox tracks by lake.

I said nothing to alarm Roy, as he was enjoying the trip immensely in spite of sore toes and groin cramp caused by not being accustomed to webs, but I was worried. If the food that we had supposedly bought from this trapper were actually intact and in the amounts

Lynx taken by Neil M. Lindsey on his British Columbia trapline.

he had said, my worries would be unfounded, but until I had actually seen them, I would continue to think of nothing else. It was a beautiful day for our mode of travel, and before darkness overtook us, we were at the cabin. Roy hastily shovelled snow from the doorway, while I investigated the stove pipe protruding from the roof. My fears were well founded. The flu was tightly packed with snow, as they had, of course, not placed a can over it before their departure.

Deep snows had fallen even with the cabin's eaves, blocking the only window. Roy was shovelling snow like a runaway bull dozer with a shovel we had thoughtfully carried in with us. He insisted, as usual, on doing the lion's share of work, and soon enough snow had been shovelled to allow us to enter the cabin. Roy stepped aside, gallantly saying, "You first, my dear Gaston. Let's see what we bought."

Almost reluctantly I pushed the door inward, stepping into the damp gloomy interior. My pard snapped on the flashlight, and we stood in the center of our new home, our eyes following the light's beam, searching for the grub pile, the object which would be most welcome.

My fears of the past few days proved unfounded, as food aplenty was in immediate evidence. Roy gave me a resounding smack on the back. "Whoopee! We're set!" he screeched.

The stove and flu were cleaned of snow, and a fire was built in the small open hearth cook stove. Roy lit the kerosene lamp, and explored every nook and crannie of the cabin, endeavoring to find if any essentials were missing. The food supply was plentiful, being of good variety. This was the intended base camp, and proved to contain the bulk of our purchased provisions. I melted snow for a mug up, and cooked a dog's bait of food that was eaten with great pleasure.

While searching under the two story bunk, Roy found a case of eggs, a very welcome addition to our fare.

"I'll say one thing for those boys. They believed in eating at least, and that bird's word was good. We have food aplenty for the remainder of the winter," I said between mouthfuls of beans and swigs of strong black coffee.

"Yeah," Roy answered. "If I'd a known all this crap was here, we sure as hell wouldn't have pulled that heavy load over that trail."

"Do you think you can find those two other cabins?" Roy asked, looking at me quizzically.

"Well, if I can't we at least have this one with plenty of provisions, and with the sixty traps we cat-hauled up here, you can try your hand at a small amount of marten trapping at least," was my answer.

Jan. 6—Tried to follow the former trapper's blazed trail, but gave it up. A clear cold day, so ran a compass line to lake where cabin is situated, finally locating it. Shovelled in and discovered that wood supply was low. Will lay in enough to-morrow to last for awhile. Grub supply not very adequate.

Jan. 7—Roy back-tracked to base cabin, blazing and making cubbies and snag sets. I cut wood all day and cleaned cabin.

Jan. 8—I took traps we found at No. 2 cabin, and following Roy's blazes, baited and set 20 traps. Met Roy at Moore Creek doing same. We returned to cabin 2. Weather is excellent. Marten sign fairly plentiful. Roy soaked his sore toes in hot salts water, and I fixed his toe straps to eliminate this discomfort.

Jan. 9—Weather clear & cold. Tried to locate camp 3, but were unsuccessful. Roy chided me about being lost. Found a good marten pass. Made 15 sets & returned to cabin 2, blazing in the process.

Jan. 10.—Roy returned to base cabin for food and to tend traps. I returned to marten pass and picked 2 nice males. Found the lost cabin, but having neglected to bring the shovel, returned to camp 2. The cabins are about 8 miles apart. Roy made round trip, proudly exhibiting 3 marten taken from his 'line.

Jan. 11.—Weather cloudy & warmer. Left for cabin 3 with shovel & grub. Picked one nice marten. Roy shovelled cut doorway. Cabin in great disorder and not much wood cut.

Jan. 12—Weather cloudy. Roy headed for base camp. I cut wood all day. Large jack pine snags were in abundance near cabin. Cloudy and cooler this eve.

Jan. 13.—Snowing billy blue blazes. Laid in camp. Skinned marten & repaired cupboard & table. Wrote an article on mink trapping, which I will mail when I go out. This cabin's only window is in the top half of the door, so the kerosene lamp was left burning all day.

Jan. 14.—Still snowing, but mushed to cabin 2, digging out 'line and resetting on way. Picked one small female in a snag set. Expected to see Roy, but storm probably held him up. Skinned marten. Shot a pack rat that had invaded our domicile.

Jan. 15.—Mushed to base camp, picked 2 more male marten. Met Roy about 2 miles from cabin. He had become ill after eating clam chowder from a can found in cabin. Was pale and weak, but concerned about me. Returned to base cabin. Roy much better. Made him some strong black tea and gave him a sedative.

Jan. 16.—Storm abated. Clear and cold. My birthday so cooked a feed, and made Tom & Jerrys fortified with a pint of home made hootch. Roy is O.K. Laid in camp & cut some more wood.

Jan. 17.—Returned to camp 2. Picked one marten. Going was rough as 3 feet

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of new snow fell. Several sets were raised. Skinned marten & to bed.

Jan. 18.—Clear & cold. Wallowed to camp 3. Dry run. Dug out sets and raised some. Flying squirrels had filled most of the traps.

Thus it went for the remainder of the season. More severe storms descended upon us, followed by below-zero weather, freezing even the larger lake. This was an asset, allowing us to take a short cut over the ice on our homeward trek. Starting February 16, in two days we were outside with a catch of thirty-seven marten, considered good in those days of brisk trapping competition.

Roy enjoyed this no end, and as an amateur, did very well. I trapped with him one more season, which, I might add, was very successful and profitable. My very compatible companion then went to Alaska to homestead and trap during the depression, and I have lost track of his whereabouts.

If this article is accepted, and you happen to read it, in Fur-Fish-Game, write me a letter, Roy, as I would enjoy hearing from you.

These recollections of seasons on wilderness trap lines are a few of the many I have experienced. Now, as any trapper knows, one will never become rich in the toe pinching game, but the pleasures and benefits we derive from this sort of life, more than compensate for loss of things of material value. Experiences of this sort and this method of livelihood, like education, cannot be taken from a man, and material things cannot be taken with us when we hit the last trail. So my philosophy is, "If you enjoy and can make a living doing it, here's more power to you."

Back For Bunnies Again

(Continued from Page 13)

where the first rabbit jumped another hit for the hedgerow in high. I missed that one, too. Right after the second shot dug up the turf, nothing more, Lulu was on the job and we had another chase going.

That rabbit was long-winded . . . and lucky. It followed the fence row to its end, dodging from one side to the other, and then cut out across open country to a woods we'd passed up during the morning. The beagle made the woods much later, but once there, stayed right with a rabbit that didn't want to leave. It was a lively chase but we were impatient and when the bunny emerged, Charlie took a chance on a fairly long shot. No soap. The rabbit turned and headed right back for the trees. We followed this time and found out why.

Clearing a strip around the edge of the timber, a farmer had stacked all the cuttings in piles where it was felled. Still loose and with plenty of room for maneuver underneath the litter, the cottontail ducked in and out, throwing Lulubelle off the track each time. We tried out-guessing the bunny by waiting at the brushpiles, but finally it lodged in one too tight and compact for Lulu to follow. We called off the dog and moved along—back to the hollow that produced so well in the morning.

We had a repeat performance. Kicking into a patch of briers, I almost stepped on a close-sitting rabbit. I saw it at precisely the second it leaped free and a first shot at close range tumbled it going down a slope. The shot spooked another rabbit and with the other barrel, I collected that one, too. I hoped it made Charlie forget the shots around the burley patch.

It should have, anyway, for right there, on the last lap to the car, Charlie missed an easy shot on a bunny close by. He needed it for a limit which went unfilled.

Except in the hollows and deeper recesses, the snow was gone when we headed northward for home again. The setting sun made a somber scene of the countryside, but now there was life on it. Orange lights glowed in farm houses along the way and farmers were in barn lots finishing the last of the days' chores. Scattered Christmas wreaths were hung out early here and there. Once Charlie stopped while a yellow school bus discharged its load of small fry for a basketball game at a county schoolhouse.

Suddenly I had a warm and happy feeling. It had been wonderful to be back rabbit hunting again. Fact is, it was grand to be back again.

Danger In The Sun

(Continued from Page 17)

deck as Scull squealed with pain and shock and grapped at his shoulder.

Lew turned the muzzle a little and caught the other twin as he leaped to his feet and swung up the hammer. Three bullets plunked into his thigh and he went down in a squawling, writhing heap.

Charlie was swimming across the intervening water before the echoes of Lew's first shots died away. "Take your time," Lew advised. "Everything's under control."

Later when the Sculls had received rough first aid treatment and were securely locked in separate cabins below, they gathered around the treasure box. As Babs expected it was crammed with paper money and justifying Charlie's first reactions, each bill was crisp and clean and they knew it had to be counterfeit. It was a keen disappointment for Babs. Her only comfort was in knowing that her brother had regained his self respect and proved himself a man even if it came too late for her to benefit financially.

Something bothered Charlie. He wondered why the brother had been so anxious for her to recover this useless stuff. Certainly be knew she would never try to pass it so why not let the stuff stay in the sea? Suddenly he upturned the chest and spilled everything upon the deck. A folded paper which had lain on the bottom now rested on top of the pile.

Charlie unfolded the paper and began to read the pencil script. When he finished all the dubious aspects of the matter were clear.

"This," he said," is all the information about the counterfiting gang your brother could dig up. But it's enough to put most if not all of them in jail. He gives addresses, names, and details I suppose he wormed out of the Sculls. It may be you'll come out very well. This information is worth money, there may be rewards out for the gang and you can cash it."

"If I get any money I'm going to give it to you," Babs said. "You risked your lives to help me and you lost your boat and motor. I hope there will be enuogh to repay you."

Later as they cruised back to the mainland to deliver the Sculls to the proper authorities, Lew came up from below with welcome news. "I found your outboard stored up forward," he told Babs. "And it took only a little persuasion to find out from Fred Scull where he hid your boat. So if it's all right with you, we'll take them to replace our own. You can have the reward money, the darned stuff isn't worth very much today."

(The End)

Trapping For Sport

By Edward Drittler

I HAVE been reading FUR-FISH-GAME for some time now, and I enjoy it very much—especially the trapping stories. I think trappig is one of the best outdoor sports, along with fishing and hunting.

A few days before the season opened last year, I had my nine traps, mostly No. 1 and No. 1½ Victors, oiled and everything ready to start trapping the following Saturday. That was the day my Christmas vacation began.

Saturday morning saw me up early and out setting my traps. I placed most of them under persimmon trees for 'possum, with a few going in trails for fox.

The first morning, I had three 'possums with the largest going 10 pounds. The other two were average in size. That day, I set a No. 1 trap under a persimmon tree for 'possum and covered it lightly with leaves. 'Possums aren't too "Sharp" and I seldom spend very much time hiding traps that are set for them.

I was surprised to find a large grey fox dancing around at the set the next morning.

I had a half-dozen rabbit gums setting for rabbits. Last season, I caught 23 rabbits, which supplied all of our neighbors with meat. One day I caught a skunk in one of the rabbit traps. I drowned him so he wouldn't let off any odor. Five 'possums were caught the same way.

My total catch of 8 'possums, 1 skunk and 23 rabbits brought only $2.05, so you can see that I do not trap for profit, but for sport. And I like to keep myself occupied during vacations.

I hope fur prices advance this year, and I suppose every trapper would be glad to see that!

I learned many new angles this past season, and I hope to do much better next year.

I have read other articles in FFG written by other boys, so I thought I would write one too. Let us see more trapping articles in this fine magazine —I know we all enjoy reading them very much.

South Dakota Toepinching

By Keith Wendelboe

IT was the trapping season of 1952-53 that I had another bad case of trapping fever. It was the 16th or 17th, a little after 6 a.m., when I started out in high hopes of finding some good fur-taking sets. On the creek that runs through our land, I had noticed several muskrats swimming around in the water. And I was going to try my luck at pinching their toes.

My sister sometimes goes with me when I run my trapline in the morning. I also run it after school, even though pelts were worth only 80c to $1.25. I can recall the time when I was about five or six years old and hardly strong enough to set a No. 1 by myself. That winter, I caught about two or three 'rats, with the help of my uncle and sister.

Around 1946-47, muskrat pelts were worth $2.50. At that time, my uncle, Clarence Kvama, trapped dad's land. But recently, he has allowed us to trap it.

There were a few 'rats along the stream, and I was determined to catch some of them. Well, getting back to my experience, I found a place where the water wasn't deep or very wide. I set a No. 1 trap there in about two or three inches of water. The next morning, it held an average-sized 'rat.

But good luck can not go on forever. One day, I had my dog along when I took a 'rat out from under a tree root. Just then, my brother Kenny yelled that another trap had a 'rat in it. I put the 'rat down, not thinking of the dog. After releasing the other 'rat from the trap jaws, I returned to find the first 'rat missing!

I figured that the dog got it, but I'm not sure if the animal was completely dead when I laid it down. That same set produced five more 'rats all quite large.

I found a slide recently used by 'rats, and, to make sure of holding whatever I caught, I placed a No. 1½ coil-spring there. The following morning, it produced an extra-large male. One of the 'rats I caught there had only one leg left, and an inch of its tail was missing.

We trapped about a quarter of mile east and an equal distance to the west. My uncle trapped around us. Last summer, I was up at his place and noticed a FUR-FISH-GAME lying on the table. I picked it up and really enjoyed its contents. FFG certainly has a lot of interesting stories about my buddies of the trapline. They share their interesting stories with me, so why shouldn't I?

I'll never forget the first story I read in it, "Mink Trapping On The Ram Cat." When I saw that, I said to myself, "This winter, you should trap for mink." But I have never caught over one mink a season yet.

A Michigan Trapline

By Montie L. O'Brien

TRAPPING season opens on December 1st here in Michigan, and on that day I was headed for Crockery Creek loaded down with traps, wire, lure, etc.

Upon arriving at the creek, I noticed a lot of 'rat signs and a few mink tracks. My favorite 'rat set is to impale a piece of apple on a stick in the bank, with a No. 2 trap placed directly beneath it. Most trappers around here don't bother with bait for 'rats, but I do.

After making about a dozen of these bait sets, I made a mink set by a little island in the middle of the creek. Then, I made another 'rat set under an old apple tree that leans out over the water. I always get two or three 'rats under this tree every season.

The next morning I was up and on the creek at 6 o'clock. Out of the twelve apple sets, I took seven rats, and under the apple tree I had a large rat that was drowned. The mink set wasn't molested, but two nights later I took a mink there that measured 23 inches on the board.

My total for 1952 was 32 'rats, 1 mink, and 2 'possums. They brought $60.00.

I subscribe to FUR-FISH-GAME and like to read anything that pertains to trapping. Lots of luck next season, fellows.

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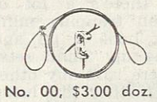

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How Do You Trap Mink?

By J. Curtis Grigg

OUR old Grandpaw who was a great lover of the outdoors and spent a lot of his eighty years hunting, fishing and trapping used to say; "There's an easy way to do anything if you are smart enough to find it out." We lived with him from the time we were about four years old until we got married. One time he was watching us choppin' wood and said; "You're doin' it the hard way! Jist swing the axe free and easy and let it do the hard work. Choppin' stiff handed and trying to push the axe into the wood won't get more wood cut, and it tires you out a lot quicker." The axe was then used with free easy swings and it made the chips fly and left a clean notch like the wood had been planed. Grandpaw was right when he added "All you have to do is to hit true and make every lick count."

He was right and the same applies to mink trapping, but there's a lot of trappers who insist on trapping mink the hard way. They hoof it up and down streams hunting up "blind sets" because they think there isn't any other way to catch mink. If they are lucky they come up with a dozen or so mink in a season.

Many trappers are expert enough and make good blind sets and can catch the mink if he comes along, but they are slow to learn the habits of the mink. When some other trapper catches a hundred or more mink in the same length of time they refuse to believe he did it.

Everybody knows or should know that mink are great rovers and travel for miles, and the expert mink trapper takes advantage of this fact and plans long lines, and covers a lot of country. He learned long ago that while blind sets are excellent mink takers, they are often hard to find and are far apart. Therefore he spreads his traps over a lot of country and lets the mink do the running. He knows that the mink will come along sooner or later.

Finding blind sets takes time and if you want to make a large catch of mink you have to "make every lick count" and not waste a lot of time running up and down the creeks looking for blind sets.

In fact, one good mink set to the mile will often catch more mink than a dozen good blind sets in the same distance. It takes a lot of time and too much tramping along the banks to make these sets. Too many footprints along the bank will often scare mink into new territory.

You say, "If I don't fill my line full of traps some other trapper will." Well, let him. We ourselves are not out to block the other trappers fun, we are out to catch the most mink possible in the short open season, and if the other fellow gets some mink that's ok. We have a long line ourselves and we will get our share. It is mainly the small-time trapper who tramps around and instead of catching the mink it will often pull out and leave and perhaps get in one of our traps a mile or so away.

Now don't let anyone tell you there just isn't any quick and easy made set that will take most any mink that comes along, anyplace and you don't have to have mink tracks to make it. Not if you know your mink. Now there's hundreds of long-line mink trappers who can fix up a man-made set under any and all conditions that will take about every passing mink but do they tell you how—or write up their methods. If they do write about mink trapping for publication they fail to give out with their best sets, and you can't blame 'em. They may even claim there isn't any set like the "dirt-hole set" for fox that can be learned well enough in an hour or so to enable an inexperienced trapper to take foxes that will work on mink. Well they are not telling the truth or are very poor mink trappers and do not know their mink.

The author's son and grandson. Both are good mink trappers.

Anyone who gives things away for free is almost sure to be giving something of little value. You have to pay for things of real value.

Just recently I read an article by a supposed expert mink trapper and he explained some of his good sets. He included the pocket set but didn't tell you exactly how to dig it so it would be 100% effective? No he did not, and the way he described his sets made us wonder if he was really a mink expert, or just trying to mislead the inexperienced.

On the other hand he may be honest enough and just an expert on foxes and coyotes, and fancies that he is an expert on mink. Many fellows are that way. This is an age of specialists in all lines and I have had trappers write me saying they had no trouble in catching foxes by the dozens but they could not take mink regularly.

After you have learned how to make sets that will click you will have to cover miles and miles of country, either with a car, afoot, on horseback, or with a dog-team if you live in the north country. If things are frozen up you have to know where the warm springs are located, or be able to make dry sets that click. There are dozens and dozens of good water set mink trappers to each real expert dry set mink trapper. Water set trappers are generally "warm weather trappers" who trap when the going is easy and quit when the going gets tough.

The old experienced mink trapper knows that mink are not water animals like the muskrat and the beaver. They are really just water loving animals and can and do live at times away from the streams for weeks at a time. Many mink do not come to streams until after the freeze-up comes. Experts expect the mink to show up more along the streams after the ponds and marshes and similar wet places freeze up. They are ready for the mid-winter run of mink which comes when the inexperienced quit and it's too cold for trap thieves to be on the prowl.

Trapping In Missouri

By Leonard Forsee

I Am 16 years old, and have been trapping for five years. When I first started trapping, I didn't do very good as I didn't know about the precautions you have to take in trapping.

The trapping season for 1950-51 opened December 1st. I set 16 traps along a bluff near my home. The first night I caught 3 'possums. I didn't catch anything for two nights. The fourth and fifth nights I caught 4 'possums, 1 skunk, and a grey fox. I then thought that I was a great trapper. The tenth day of the season I caught 2 'possums, a 'coon, and a skunk.

As muskrat season opened December 15th, I started getting my 'rat traps ready. On that day I took 4 'possums and 2 'coon on my bluff trapline. When the muskrat season opened, I set 12 traps in a creek that runs by our home. I caught 2 muskrats the first night. After this it started snowing and freezing, which made trapping difficult. But I did manage to catch 5 'possums, 2 'coons, and 2 muskrats.

In all, that season, I took 18 'possums, 5 'coons, 5 muskrats, 2 skunks, and 1 grey fox. I thought that it was a pretty fair season.

Southern Alabama 'Coon Trapping

By Billy Mills

AS the 'coon trapping season opens on December 1st, November 30th found me selecting some good trap locations.

The following evening I set only four traps, and took a large male 'coon the first night. The next few nights were dreary to trappers, because of a continual flooding rain and hard winds. On the first night after the storm, I took three 'coons out of the four sets. One of these was a 12 pound bob-tailed male. A 12 pound 'coon is average for these parts, however, a 15 to 20 pounder is not uncommon.

For the next two days, I reset and made more 'coon and mink sets.

The best bait I have found for 'coon is some kind of fresh meats—usually fish.

The season rolled on, with me taking 'coons occasionally, until the last day of the season when I took two foxes and a 'possum. Foxes are usually hard to hold here. I remember one I caught one morning after a hard rain. Only his foot was left in the trap by 12 o'clock. This cannot always be prevented, as fox sometimes gnaw off on top of the trap, instead of under it.

As an all around trap for 'coon, I recommend the No. 1½ Victor long-spring. I haven't lost one yet, except by chewing out. This is also a good grey fox, 'possum, and mink trap.

Marsh, Stream And River Muskrat Trapping

By Ronald Ververs

THE marsh trapper is the trapper with a strong constitution. He also has to be willing to take a few dips in the water throughout the season. But most likely to end up with a large catch of high quality 'rats.

The marsh has many places for muskrat sets, such as feed beds, runs, log sets, etc. Some trappers trap on muskrat mounds, but I don't advise it, as it frightens the 'rats.

When the freeze up comes, all sets above the waterline are useless. This is the time under ice trapping comes into its own. The best sets for this kind of trapping are the pole or shelf set, box or basket set, and also the run set, near mounds or dens. If the run is being used you'll see green shoots, bulbs, and air bubbles over the run, but under the ice, I might add droppings also can be noticed laying on the bottom of the run.

The pole set produces more rats for me than does the basket set. Both of these sets are fully illustrated in the book called "Trapping North American Furbearers".

The fresh water swamp, or marsh, muskrat is usually larger, and has darker fur than the stream or river 'rats. The marsh usually has more and better feed, than the streams or rivers. Too, the cattails and sweetflag plants give the 'rats shelter from the sun during the summer months, which helps maintain dark fur.

A half acre swamp can supply feed for more rats than a half mile of stream. Another advantage a swamp has, is it's quite a bit harder for Johnny Sneakum to get at your traps. His favorite hangout is down by the river side.

The stream trapper has things pretty easy, except he has to take quite a chance of getting his traps robbed. Most streams harbor mink and 'coon. So, he has a chance of getting them, too. Muskrats are quite easy to take along the stream. The dens and bait sets are about the best. Stream 'rats feed on roots, mussels, willow bark and other "soft" trees.

These 'rats are usually lighter in color due to exposure to the sun. They are very often called "red" 'rats.

The river trapper, should have a canoe or boat for transportation. It is not altogether necessary, although it is a good idea to have a canoe on hand when you need it.

The spring floods take a big total of 'rats and traps on the river. But this is one of the best times of year to make big 'rat catches. Your best set at this time of the season is the log set or any other floating object. They mate at this time, and males leave musk on practically every log or protruding object. You'll find that a good 75% or more of your 'rats will be males. One reason is that the male 'rats do a lot of moving in the early part of spring. The river muskrat is a fairly dark-furred 'rat, but is usually long and slender. Their feed is none too good if there are no swamps along the river.

You'll find that your early fall 'rats have quite a bit of black down the back of their skins. This is one way of grading a 'rat. The saying is the whiter the skin the primer the pelt. So if your 'rats are streaked with black strips down the skin it doesn't mean you'll get a better price for them.

I know how all you marsh trappers, when prospecting a marsh before the coming season, get a thrill out of finding new mounds, and stream trappers get the same thrill when you find a dozen or more well-used dens along the stream.

And when you river trappers are prospecting and paddle your canoe around the bend in the river and find a new colony of 'rat houses in a little swamp, you get the same thrill. I'm pretty lucky—I trap all three: marsh, stream and river. And I dream of making a big catch of muskrats just as the rest of you young trappers dream of doing. Keep on reading FUR-FISH-GAME, as it's a very interesting and educational trappers' magazine.

My 1952-53 catch consisted of 83 muskrats, 2 weasels, 1 'coon, 1 grey fox, and 14 'possums. There are few mink in this section of New Jersey (Clifton). Our season usually runs from November 30th, to March 15th, and I think that is long enough for any trapper. This coming season November will make my fifth year as a trapper.

I'll have to check the marsh in the early morning, this coming season, and the river at night after work. I have weekends free so on Saturday I'll set four streams I know of, and pull them up Sunday. Muskrats are my "dish," and New Jersey's marshes, streams, and rivers are loaded with them.

Iowa Fur Catch Down

Iowa's fur prices for the past season followed the national trend downward and Midwest trappers generally had a poor year. The value of Iowa's fur take in the 1953-1954 season was $250,000 below the preceding season and 40,000 fewer pelts reached the markets.

The average price for muskrat last season was 69 cents, compared to the 1952-1953 average of $1.13. Muskrats led the Iowa fur total with 335,451 pelts worth $231,461. Minks headed the value list with 30,459 pelts being sold for $380,-891. The average price paid for mink last season was $13.49; the 1952-1953 price was $16.40.

Low Prices Deter Trapping

Reports from leading fur trapping states indicate that while the population of certain fur bearers is on the increase, low prices received by trappers will deter any substantial rise in the fur crop.

In certain states, increases in the population of beaver and raccoon are reported and in some areas the muskrat population is said to be recovering under more favorable climatic conditions.

Generally, state wild life agencies anticipate little change in the fur crop unless the price structure is elevated so as to make trapping financially more attractive.

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Trapping On The Prairies

By Clarence Thio

I HAVE been trapping since I was ten years old, and that is from 1949. My home is in Manitoba in the Boissevain district.

Here is my catch since 1949:

1949-50 season—1 weasel, 6 muskrats and 4 jack rabbits.

1950-51 season—5 weasel, 21 muskrats, 11 jack rabbits and 1 skunk.

1951-52 season—2 weasel, 21 muskrats, 5 jack rabbits, 5 bush rabbits, 1 raccoon, 4 red fox, 1 skunk and 7 mink.

This just goes to show how experience improves your catch each year, and how fast you can catch on to the art of trapping.

Now I would like to tell you of my experiences of the 1952-53 season.

The first day of the season found me out stringing steel. I was planning to set some traps for mink and weasel in some nearby ponds. We will call them the east pond and west pond. I started out toward the east pond and on the way I came across a weasel track in the snow. I decided I would track him down so I followed the twisting and winding imprints in one hole and out another. Here and there, the remains of mice were scattered about. I followed the track for about thirty minutes. Then I came to a hole that the weasel entered and had not come out. I took it that this was the hole in which the weasel had denned up. I took a No. 0 trap from my pack sack and set it at the entrance of the hole, using dead grass for a covering. Now the set was complete and ready for Mr. Weasel to come out.

I then moved on toward the pond. Many muskrats were living there, and I noticed where mink had been digging into the sides of 'rat houses. I made a few blind sets at these places, as I always seem to have the best luck with them. I think that bait sets just make the animals more wary. Anyway, mink prefer to kill their own food, but perhaps if made right and practised, bait sets can become very successful.

After that, I headed for home and on the way back I paid a visit to my weasel set. I noticed that the trap chain was tight and leading down into the hole. I pulled it out and with it came a beautiful, large prairie long-tail. I knew he would bring a pretty nice price at the present market. He was still alive and fighting mad. I think that these little creatures are the most vicious furbearers of their size.

Later, I took the weasel home and skinned it. On the drying board, it measured 24 inches. Then, I went to the west pond and set some traps for mink the same manner as before. I also made some bait sets for weasels.

The first trip over the line proved fruitless. However, the following day I lost a weasel out of one trap—only the toe was left. One of the mink traps was snapped, too.

In a few days, I decided to travel my line again. The first few weasel traps were empty. Then, I came to the mink sets on the muskrat houses. The first trap was untouched, but the second was knocked off. Upon nearing the third set, I could see that the trap had been disturbed. It was pulled into the muskrat den, and, upon taking it out, an extra-large buck mink came into view. He jumped at me and took a big chunk out of my rubber.

It took me two hours to skin the mink, but the $30.00 I received for him made it worthwhile. He measured 36 inches.

The next look at the traps brought me a large brush weasel. It was caught in an official weasel trap. The mink traps failed to click.

The next time, I picked up a large prairie weasel but no mink were caught. The next two days featured thawing weather, bringing the skunks out of hibernation. When I looked at my traps again, I had two skunks in my mink sets.

Then, one day while I was out visiting a neighbor, I learned that a mink had been cleaning out the chicken coops. They had made sets to catch him, but all efforts had failed. I was asked to try to catch the varmint. I went home, got a few traps, and returned to set them. I could not find a new hole where he had entered—only old rat holes. I set my traps at these and hoped for the best.

The next morning, the traps were untouched. I then decided that I would have to do some prospecting. In a corner of the hen house, there was a pail filled with grain. I lifted the pail, and there was the hole—also chicken feathers and blood. The mink had evidently dug under the pail to the hole and filled it up again behind him.

I raised the pail up on two boards and set two No. 1 stop-loss traps at the entrance of the hole. The next morning, I found a nearly pure black mink at the set, caught in both traps. The blood from the 14 chickens he drained gave me a nice, silky pelt.

The next day, I went over the line again, but the traps were empty. A heavy snow had fallen during the night. It appeared that the mink had left the small ponds and started travelling the creeks and rivers.

On the way around the line, I was attracted by a squeaking noise nearby in the bull-rushes. I then spotted a weasel on a muskrat house looking at me curiously. I cautiously raised my trusty .22 single shot rifle and with one shot he was mine.

After that, I picked up my traps on the ponds as the fur was getting scarce there. I moved my traps to a nearby creek, travelling the distance by bicycle.

In the valley, there were several mink. I set traps for them in trails over beaver dams, in bank holes, and by a hole in the ice that was kept open by a swarm of minnows.

The first look at the traps brought me a nice, large male mink. He was caught in a trail set. It graded "cotton," which I later learned meant a freak.

When visiting my traps again, I had two mink toes in one trap, and another was sprung. I reset the traps and hoped for better luck.

A bank hole set produced a beautiful, large mink the following trip. And walking on a little farther, I noticed where foxes had made a packed trail over a mound. It seemed like an excellent place for a set. In a few minutes, I had a No. 3 double-spring trap placed in their trail.

A few days later I went to see if any traps were occupied. All of the mink sets were undisturbed, however, I could see from a distance that the fox trap was missing. Looking over in a clump of willows, I saw a large red fox caught in my trap. This was the first fox I had caught, but I did it with little effort. I don't think foxes are as hard to trap as some people say.

The next night a heavy snow fell, and the day after was perfect for tracking down weasels and mink. I followed an old road and soon crossed a fresh weasel track. After following it for about an hour, I found where he holed up. I set a No. 1 trap at the hole and continued on.

I then cut off towards the creek and there I found that a mink had been travelling the creek early that morning. The tracks led me to a hole in the bank near a beaver dam. I set a No. 1½ at the entrance and covered it with tissue paper and snow.

My other traps along the creek were all covered with snow, and I had a job locating all of them.

The following day, I went out to see if the time I had used to track down the furbearers was worth while. On approaching the first weasel set, I noticed that the trap had been pulled down into the hole. I lifted the trap and out came an extra-large prairie weasel.

I went on to the second set and, upon nearing it, I saw the weasel all tangled up in the trap. It was caught by both hind legs and, a female, it was smaller than the first.

At my mink set, I found a beautiful buck mink in the trap. He was the biggest of the season, measuring 37 inches. I went home feeling real proud of my 100% catch.

During the winter here, there is a muskrat season, but the snow is usually very deep over two-three feet of ice. Although I did catch a few muskrats, they were not worth the effort put forth. So I ended the season with 5 mink, 1 red fox, 6 weasels, 3 muskrats, 2 skunks, and 15 jack rabbits, which I shot on the trapline.

Did you ever try to track down a furbearer? If not, you should try it. It is my most sure-fire method of trapping, and I have caught over half of my mink and weasels with this method. It also gives you a chance to learn the habits of furbearers.

It has failed me only once since I started trapping. That was two years ago when I tracked down a mink and set a trap for him in a clump of bushes around a pond. I placed the trap at the entrance, but the next morning the trap was undisturbed and the mink was gone. I should have looked for another entrance.

Also, I have found that a rifle carried on the trapline comes in handy. Once, I was out looking at my traps and had left my rifle at home. Upon nearing a muskrat den, a mink darted out of it. The pond was covered with ice and the mink could not run very fast. All I had for a weapon was a hammer I used for driving stakes, but I threw it at the mink, hitting him on the head. Luck was surely with me that day, but from then on I have always carried a gun with me.

I look forward to receiving FUR-FISH-GAME each month, and I think it is the best magazine of its kind.

Fellows, if you haven't tried your hand at trapping—do so. You'll never regret it!

Fur Prices Higher

New season wild mink is bringing about 25 per cent over last year's opening prices and muskrat is averaging 10 per cent higher in the market here.

Fresh skins have begun to trickle into New York in the past two weeks or so, but big quantities are yet to come, according to raw fur skin handlers here.

Thus far, the bulk of the wild mink arriving here has been sold to Canadian and European buyers, it is reported.

Small quantities of ranch-raised mink have entered the market also, and pelting seems to be proceeding at about the same rate as last year, according to ranching circles. Pelting, however, is characterized as somewhat later than normal. Last year, too, it is pointed out, pelting was delayed by unfavorable warm weather in various parts of the country.

Dressing Tie-Up Eyed

The work stoppage in the dressing and dyeing industry reportedly has had little effect thus far on sales of wild mink, though it may be deterring activity in muskrat and ranch-raised mink.

Purchasers of wild mink apparently want to buy at once, regardless of the fancy fur dressers' shutdown. For one thing, it is noted, prime wild mink is available for only a limited period—during the legal trapping season—and early sales more or less establish market levels for the full season. Secondly, wild mink men take the view that the dressing shutdown will be short-lived, and they want to be ready to place their skins in the dress as soon as the processors resume operations.

On the other hand, the dressers shutdown operates as a greater deterrent to ranch mink sales. Potential buyers, while they need certain types of standards and mutations, know there will be big quantities available in the next month and thereafter. Rather than risk delays resulting from the dressing stoppage, they prefer to wait.

Muskrat Sales Slowed

The muskrat business, it is also pointed out, is not so active that manufacturers cannot hold off purchases pending a settlement of the labor-management difficulties in the dyeing and dressing field.

Wild mink prices have not only held up in the face of the dressing shutdown, but have advanced in some cases in the past two weeks.

United Fur Brokers, for example, reported yesterday that it had sold Minnesota wild mink at a top of $33 and $23, and New England at $23. About two weeks or 10 days ago fur men were paying in the country $25.50 to $26 for males and $15.50-$16 for females from Wisconsin; Minnesotas were bringing $29.50 to $30 and $19 to $20. United estimates current wild mink prices at 25 per cent above last year's opening.

Small quantities of ranch-raised mink have been sold here as follows: Pastels, fair size Eastern strains, $30-$34 for males and $17-$19 for females. This is about the same as last year's opening levels and about 10 per cent higher than December, 1953, prices.

Dark Mink Average

Standard darks have been sold at $18 to $19 for males and $11.50 to $12 for females, or about 5 per cent above a year ago.

Platinums have brought $19 to $19.75 for males and $12.50 for females, or about 10 per cent under a year ago.

Fresh muskrat appears to be averaging an increase of 10 per cent over last year's opening prices. United reports muskrat sales as follows, with last year's price in parentheses: Maine, XL, L and good mediums, $1.50 ($1.35-$1.40); medium and small, 80 cents. Michigan (upper peninsula), $1.35 ($1.15) and 75 cents. Wisconsin, $1.25 ($1.10-$1.15) and 70 cents.

Montreal Fur Sale

A record attendance marked the opening of the first Canadian auction of raw furskins of the new season at Canadian Fur Auction Sales Co. (Quebec) Ltd.

Offerings of Alaska seal and Canada dark mink, a collection of quality standards, sold for the first time under the new label by Canada mink breeders, formed the main attractions.

The entire mink section, including both Canada dark mink and the emba offerings, as well as collections from independent shippers, did rather well and reached price levels some 10 per cent above those of the previous year.

Dark Mink Watched

As to Canada dark mink, atmosphere in the salesroom was one of anticipation as many American buyers attended the auction "just to see how things would develop."

"Of course we have no comparison, as this is a new item on the market, but results of this first sale indicate strong prices and a very good demand" one of the buyers stated.

Raw mutation mink pelts for the account of independent shippers also reached percentages somewhat higher than last year's opening sale.

Lively Interest

Attendance consisted mostly of American and Canadian buyers, although a lively interest in the day's proceedings was shown by a representative of the Soviet Trade Commission, Ottawa, who made a thorough inspection of mink offerings on show.

Canada dark mink, labeled (5,216 skins for 1 pt D's), reached a top of $32.50 for XDK males. Ranges in general were XDK males $20 to $32.50, females $12.25 to $16.26; XDK & DK males $19.25 to $22.50 and females $11 to $14.75. DK males were $18.75 to $19.75, and females $11 to $12.25.

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Send questions directly to E. J. Dailey, Ogdensburg, N. Y. Please limit questions to five or less. If you want a quick reply please enclose a stamped return envelope.

Question—Is trapping good for the common fur animals in Huron County? 2. Are mink found in Richland County? 3. When making a 'coon set on a log over a small stream, should the trap be covered and if so how? 4. How many traps could a boy handle on a three day trapping trip? 5. Is sun-rendered fish oil sufficient as a lure when trapping mink? 6. Is it possible to make run-way sets in water by staking with cat-tail stems?—T. L. R.

Answer—Fairly good. 2. Yes. 3. The trap should be covered with moss. 4. Probably three dozen. 5. Sun-rendered fish oil has a bait odor only and since it is a decomposed odor and since mink do not eat decomposed fish, we doubt if it has any value as a mink attractor when used alone, but if mixed with mink musk, beaver castor and muskrat musk, is a fair mink attractor. 6. Could be done if placed naturally.

Question—Will you tell me about muskrat, mink, fox, weasel, beaver, otter, 'coon and skunk and how to trap them?—J. V., Pa.

Answer—Our limited space here does not allow us to to go into extensive set making, therefore we refer you to one of our books on trapping or one of the books on trapping advertised in this magazine.

Question—What are the fur animals of Taylor County, Wisc.? 2. What is used for muskrat bait? 3. Lure? 4. Would $75.00 buy enough trapping equipment for a young trapper? 5. What animal has a den entrance about 12 inches in diameter? 6. Will a number O trap hold muskrats? 7. How can I make drowning sets for muskrats? 8. How can I prevent ice from forming over a trap?—G. G. M., Wisc.

Answer—Mink, muskrat, weasel, skunk, fox, 'coon, otter, etc. 2. Bulbs and roots from marsh vegetation are best, although such materials as slices of carrot, parsnip, apple, onion, etc. are sometimes used. 3. See answer to "young trapper" in this issue. 4. Yes. 5. Possibly skunk. 6. Will hold most muskrats if springs and trap in good condition. 7. Use about three feet extension wire and drive a drowning stake in deep water so the trapped animals will wind around it. 8. At important sets, a small bag of common table salt placed under or near the trap will prevent ice freezing.

Question—At what time in the Spring do snowshoe rabbits have their first litter of young in Central to Northern Wisconsin? 2. There is no protection on rabbits here and I desire to know if you think it a sport to shoot them in Spring and Summer? 3. I live in Wausau Lake formed by several rivers and wish to know if it is a good place to trap mink? 4. Would a boat be an advantage in trapping? 5. There is a large public fishing ground not far from here and I have noticed many kinds of animal tracks around it and could recognize 'coon tracks, and would like to know the comparative difference between a mink and a 'coon track?—E. T., Wisc.

Answer—Usually late in April or early May. 2. Shooting a female rabbit in Spring or Summer might mean that the young would die of starvation. 3. Should be a good place to trap, however most mink are taken on small streams, many of which flow into the lake you mention. 4. A decided advantage until ice forms. 5. Mink tracks are about one quarter the size of 'coon traps and are nearly round and not sprawling like 'coon tracks, in fact mink tracks look very much like those of a small or young house-cat, excepting they usually lope rather than walk.

Question—A friend of mine has a large woods and deer and bear do not live in it, yet do live adjacently and I wish to know what could be planted in the woods to attract them?—Reader, Canada.

Answer—There may be other reasons why animals do not inhabit the woods such as insufficient shelter and if there is no green timber in the woods, some of that planted in groups would supply shelter in winter and such trees as black cherry, beech, thorn apple, wild apples, etc. would supply food.

Question—Is there a fair supply of muskrat, mink, 'coon, skunk, weasel, 'possum, etc. around Cranston, R. I.? 2. What size trap should I use for trapping muskrats? 3. What kind of bait? 4. I have seen many muskrat holes and tracks on my trapline but thus far I have been unable to trap them and I would like to know the reason I cannot catch them? L. C., R. I.

Answer—Yes. 2. Size number I, preferably the guard type that prevents the 'rats from twisting out and escaping. 3. Roots and bulbs from swamp and marsh vegetation. 4. Muskrats do not fear traps so the reason must be that you are not placing your traps where they travel and suggest setting traps in den entrances, at edge of feeding beds, at base of slides along stream banks and in trails.

Question—What do you consider the best pheasant dog? 2. Is Hunter Trader Trapper still published? 3. What is the best way to kill a trapped fox?—R. S. C., Pa.

Answer—That depends on whether you want a pointer, setter or one of the old fashioned dogs that bark, however the Irish Spaniel or English Setter should prove good. 2. No. 3. When trapping for bounty at times when the fur is of no value, the simple, easy way is to shoot the fox with a .22 through the head, and do not be afraid that blood of any kind at a fox set will injure it, but when trapping for fur the best way is to tap the fox at the base of the brain with a light stick to knock it off balance, then step firmly on the body just back of the front leg and stand there until animal is dead.

Question—What is the best place to trap in Lehigh County, Pa.? 2. In Pennsylvania? 3. In the United States?—C. K., Pa.

Answer—Since trapping conditions vary from year to year in all sections, it is best to look the territory over during late Summer and note all animal tracks and sign and where you find the most sign should be the best place to trap. 2. As mentioned, conditions vary from time to time, but among the best counties in Penna. for trapping, we might mention Pike, Potter, Monroe, Cameron, etc. 3. Such states as Maine, Vermont, New York, Michigan, Minnesota, and Wisconsin are among the big fur producers, but only carefully done fur prospecting will locate the fur "pockets".

Question—What are the main fur animals of Ward County, N. D.? 2. Which of those mentioned might be trapped within a five mile radius of Minot?—B. C., N. D.

Answer—Wolf, coyote, fox, bob-cat, mink, skunk, weasel, otter, 'coon, muskrat, etc. 2. Mink, skunk, weasel, badger, 'coon, fox, muskrat, etc.

Question—How can I keep traps from rusting from season to season? 2. If I should catch a muskrat out of season, what should I do with it? 3. How could I get muskrat to come out of a pond or lake to small streams? 4. Can I legally trap on the lands of another without having a trapping license?—G. H., Ky.

Answer—By coating them with melted wax. 2. If the muskrat is alive, it should be released, otherwise the animal should be turned over to your local game protector. 3. You might induce them to go up the small streams that enter into a lake or pond by the use of bait and lure or scent. 4. Without knowing your age we are unable to answer and suggest you take the matter up with your local game protector.

Question—How many dog-proof fox sets are there? 2. What is a good under-ice muskrat set on a large creek? 3. If cattail roots were boiled in water, would they make a good muskrat attractor? 4. Can fox be called in daytime with a fox call? 5. What is the best fox call? 6. To whom can I sell medicinal roots and barks?—L. H., Mich.

Answer—As far as I know the mound set is the only recognized dog proof set, although many have been advertised that were dog-proof and also fox-proof, but a fox trapper can make any set mostly dog-proof by placing the trap in proper position and by using baits not usually attractive to dogs or in extreme cases by using lure only without any bait. 2. Cut a hole through the ice where the bank is fairly steep and by the aid of a spade or shovel or trowel and long rubber glove, dig out an excavation in the bank to hold a trap and about eight inches under the ice, then place trap on shelf and about four inches above trap, impale a slice of apple which has been soaked in muskrat lure on a stick. 3. Boiling the roots would destroy most of the natural odors and would lessen the value of the roots as a 'rat atttractor. 4. We believe so if used properly. 5. As far as we know they are all made on the one principle, that of making a sound like a wounded rabbit. 6. To Maas & Steffen Inc., Pine St., St. Louis, Mo.

Question—Where can I obtain information about the section around Trout Mountain, who owns the land, etc.? 2. What are the main fur animals of that section? 3. What are marten pelts selling for?—N. D., Ia.

Answer—There are many Trout Mountains and since you failed to give the state where the one you are interested is located, we cannot answer, however usually the best way to obtain information is to visit the section and obtain first hand information. 2. Unable to answer for reason given. 3. Marten vary in price as to color and section from which they come and the Rocky Mountain marten is usually pale and of low quality, selling for around $15.00 average.

Question—What fur animals could I expect to trap around the Medota River Swamps near Minneapolis? 2. Does it harm the fur if pelts are frozen while drying? 3. How many mink live together in a den? 4. Will a number 1½ trap hold raccoon?—J. J., Minn.

Answer—Mink, muskrat, 'coon, skunk, weasel, fox, etc. 2. No, freezing pelts dry is one of the very best methods. 3. Other than a mother with young, mink are not very sociable and prefer to live alone and two mink usually fight when they meet, particularly male mink. 4. A good 1½ longspring will hold most 'coon.

Question—On what animals and birds is a bounty paid in this state?—J. M., Minn.

Answer—Obtain that information from Department of Conservation, St. Paul, Minn., or from your local game protector.

Question—How does Saginaw County, Mich., rate for trapping? 2. How is the fur quality? 3. How many traps can a fourteen year old school-boy handle who has a motor scooter? 4. Does it pay to use the guard type traps for trapping muskrats? 5. Would it pay me to tan my muskrat skins and hold them since the price the past fur season was not very high? 6. Which of your trapping books would you suggest I buy?—T. E. Mich.

Answer—Very good in most parts. 2. Good. 3. About three dozen. 4. Yes, especially where traps are set in shallow water. 5. Very few if any fur dealers are interested in home tanned skins and at present it looks like muskrat skins would sell considerably higher this coming season than they did last season. 6. Our book "Science of Trapping" is particularly valuable to trappers and there are many excellent books on trapping also advertised in this magazine.

Question—Are there many red fox in Lancaster County, Nebr.? 2. How should I treat traps to be set for coyote? 3. What is the "scent-post" set? 4. In a past issue of your magazine, Doc Jenkins told of having a secret lure formula and I wish to know if it is suitable for attracting wolves and coyotes? 5. Are there many timber wolves in Lancaster County? 6. When making beaver sets at den entrances I found that usually my traps had only sticks in them and I would like to know the reason? 7. Could I make a living by trapping here in Eastern Nebraska, considering that I have had five years trapping experience?—D. P., Nebr.

Answer—Reported fairly plentiful. 2. Remove all dirt and loose rust by the aid of a wire brush, then boil traps in a solution of one pound log-wood extract to each five gallons of water and when water is boiling, melt enough white, refined beeswax on top of the water to completely cover it and when traps are a deep blue or black, lift them out and they will take on a small amount of wax which makes them free of steel odor and rust-proof. 3. The scent post is a urinating post and foxes and wolves will usually stop at such post if it has been lured with strictly natural type lure or fox or coyote urine. 4. We do not know. 5. Some parts of that county have a fair amount of timber wolves. 6. Setting beaver traps in den entrances is usually not a good practice as the water is apt to be so deep that the beaver swim in over them and when they discard sticks from which they have eaten the bark, they usually pile them around the den entrance, often springing traps. It is better to make bait and lure or scent sets not far from the dens. 7. You could at least make a living during the trapping season.

Question—Do you think it would be worthwhile to trap fox for bounty in my section? 2. When do fox give birth to the young? 3. Are the prices of raw furs advancing or dropping? 4. Do trappers receive more money by shipping their furs to large fur houses? 5. What do you think of the future of trapping in Michigan? 6. Should the feet be left on weasel skins same as on mink? 7. Do you think it would be worthwhile trapping skunk, 'possum and weasel at present fur prices?—Subscriber, Mich.

Answer—You could at least expect to make wages if you know how to trap fox. 2. Usually in April. 3. The raw fur market in general is in better condition than it was a year ago and we refer you to reports of fur auction sales published in this magazine for fur prices. 4. Sometimes they do. 5. Due to somewhat lower prices on long furs the past few years, less trapping has been done not only in Michigan but elsewhere and most furs are reported plentiful in almost all parts of the United States. 6. They bring no more money when left on either weasel or mink or any other skin. 7. There is of course more money to be made trapping mink, muskrats, otter, etc., but when a trapper is out on a trapline, it takes only a little more time to catch some of all the fur animals that are found on it, and that usually is the way to make the most money, and weasel are well worth trapping at present fur values.

Question—Is it more difficult to trap fur animals during the open season for deer? 2. Would trapping be profitable within a five mile radius of Pontiac, Mich.? 3. How is trapping around the county line of Ogemaw and Oscoda?—A. F., Mich.

Answer—Animals like wolf and fox are usually more elusive during deer season on account of the extra noise and human sign in the territory, but it does not affect trapping for mink, 'coon, muskrat, otter, etc. 2. We believe it would and animals like mink and muskrats are often found close to cities and towns, in fact often within city limits. 3. Both counties are within territory that rates good for general trapping.

Question—Can raccoon be taken in wooden, box-style traps? 2. What can I do to keep ants from eating apples used for bait on my box trap triggers?—A. C., Mo.

Answer—Yes, but it is more difficult than when using steel traps and should only be considered when there is a demand for live 'coon at considerably higher than pelt prices. 2. Soak the slices of apple in oil rhodium which will keep the ants off and improve the bait.

Question—I have lived in Indiana all my life and have had eight years trapping experience here and I am wondering if I could expect to be successful trapping in the North as I would like to have a small farm for Summer work and trap in the Winter? 2. Will the action of an automatic pistol freeze at 50 degrees below zero? 3. Would a Winchester Model 70 freeze at fifty below?—D. H., Ind.

Answer—When you mention the North, we do not know how far North you mean, but you could we believe be successful in any of our Northern states. 2. It is the oil that freezes at low temperatures and either no oil should be used at the temperature you mention or an oil especially made to withstand such temperature. 3. Same answer as two, although Northern trappers we know seldom carry a heavy rifle on a trapline, for some extra traps are much more important.

Question—How is the section around Winchester, Wisconsin for trapping? 2. Are there many trappers in that section? 3. Is Winchester a large or small town? 4. Where can I obtain the hunting and trapping laws of Wisc.? 5. Does Wisc. issue a non-resident trapping license? 6. What is the average Winter temperature in that section? 7. Average snowfall? 7. How is the fur quality? 8. What kind of part time work could I expect to find in that locality?—J. K., Ohio.

Answer—Some good trapline opportunities in that section of Vilas County for common fur animals and some beaver, otter, wolf, etc. 2. We do not think it is overtrapped, in fact almost no section is at present, other than perhaps for mink. 3. Would rate as a small town but is large enough to have a post-office. 4. From Conservation Department, Madison, Wisc. 5. No. 6. About twenty-two degrees above zero. 7. About twenty-four inches. 8. Very good. Usual work in town, lumbering and pulp cutting, mining not too far away, etc.

Question—How is the trapping around Irondequoit, N. Y.?—D. Q., N. Y.

Answer—Fair to good for common farmland fur animals.

Question—What fur animals could I expect to trap around Oconto, Wisc.? 2. Could I catch and raise muskrats for pets? 3. When do muskrats have young in the section inquired about? 4. Do you think the trapping for mink and muskrats would be good along Oconto River?—L. F., Wisc.

Answer—Mink, muskrat, fox, 'coon, skunk, weasel, etc. 2. Perhaps but those who have tried it have not usually been successful. 3. The first litter is born about May 10, and sometimes another litter is born in late Summer. 4. Should be a very good place.

Question—Which breed of hound makes the best 'coon dog? 2. What breed of dog is used for silent trailing and that has short ears? 3. Do you think that crossing a hound with a short-eared dog would produce a good 'coon dog? 4. If so, what cross would you suggest? 5. What are some of the best counties in Maryland for 'coon hunting? 6. What state has the best all-around hunting?—A. S., Ky.

Answer—Probably the training is more important than the breed, although many 'coon hunters prefer the redbone or blue-tick. 2. The airedale is sometimes used for that purpose. 3. Sometimes a "cross" makes an excellent varmint or 'coon dog. 4. Perhaps airedale and hound or hound and shepherd. 5. Allegany, Cecil, Calvert, and Frederick are rated as among the best. 6. That would be impossible to answer, although states like Idaho, Wyoming and Colorado rate high as hunting states for big game.

Question—Where can I buy live raccoon, beaver, skunk, fitch, marten, fisher, weasel, otter and badger for breeding stock?—R. H., N.Y.

Answer—Some of these can be obtained from fur ranchers who advertise in this magazine and to whom you can write and the others will be a proposition of buying them from trappers and an ad in this magazine will secure about anything you may want in the way of live animals.

Question—Is there a bounty on any animals in Ohio, if so on what animals and where collected?—T. K., O.

Answer—There are periodical bounties on fox in Ohio and you can obtain present information from Conservation Division, Dept. of Agriculture, Columbus, O.

Question—Would any bull-heads, crappies or blue-gills be apt to leave a pond if the pond was flooded by a two feet depth of water?—H. W., Nebr.

Answer—We believe some of them would.

Question—What counties near Marshall, W. Va. are inhabited by beaver? 2. For what animals can groundhog flesh be used for bait? 3. What is a good set for fox where dogs are apt to get caught? 4. What is a good lure at such set? 5. What is a good set for beaver? 6. A good lure for attlacting beaver?—K. F. H., W. Va.

Answer—Since beaver have been rapidly spreading into new territory within the past few years and therefore hard to keep up to date on their new locations, we suggest you write Conservation Commission, Charleston, W. Va. for the latest information. 2. Fox, wolf, coyote, badger, 'possum, bob-cat, etc. 3. The mound set is the best discovered thus far and is made by concealing a trap on top of a mound such as a tall ant-hill, abandoned muskrat house, small manure pile, etc. and adding a few drops of lure on the top of the mound but not directly over the trap and several large pieces of flesh bait are tossed down a few feet from the base of the mound. 4. Natural type fox lure is best. 5. That depends on the time of year, but beaver come readily to lure or scent and bait such as fresh cut branches and twigs from poplar, birch, cherry, soft-maple, moose-wood, alder, willow, etc. 6. A beginner will usually do better with a prepared beaver lure, and also a little beaver caster from a strange colony of beaver placed around the set or rubbed on the bait is an advantage.

Question—I have been told that some professional trappers use something to stop running mink long enough so they can get the odor of lure and bait at a set and I wish to know what they use and how it is used? 2. What other materials besides regular lure is valuable at a mink set?—B. T., Pa.

Answer—Some trappers use beaver castor or castoreum which is tinctured beaver castor for that purpose and which is placed on a dry stick in the direct line of travel of the mink, the reason for that being that it is not always possible to make a good set in the regular "runs" of mink and the 'castor will slow down or stop even a running mink long enough for it to locate the set.

Question—When I get old enough, could I expect to make a living as a hunter and trapper up in the Yukon section of Canada? 2. What kinds of fur animals are found in the Yukon, 3. How much would a log cabin cost in the Yukon region cost if located along a stream or on a lake?—"Bill."

Answer—Much of the Yukon territory has been set aside for use of the native Indians and Eskimo and it would probably be necessary to become a British subject before you could obtain a license to trap in any part of Canada and so we suggest you consider some of the less settled sections of the United States and we assure you that more fur is trapped each year in the United States than in Canada. 2. Beaver, otter, mink, wolf, lynx, muskrat, ermine, fox, etc. 3. It would usually be necessary to build one and the cost outside of your labor would be very small.

Question—What are the opportunities in wildlife conservation and research? 2. Is a college education necessary? 3. What could a 14-year-old boy do for conservation? 4. Are there any game farms who raise wolves, coyotes, jaguars, mountain lion and lynx? 5. How can I arouse interest in conservation? 6. Is there any hope for a polluted river after the pollution has been stopped? —P. F. M., Conn.

Answer—Such positions as game protectors, forest rangers, game management, predatory animal control, etc. come under that heading. 2. In most cases such education is necessary. 3. Perhaps raise game birds and release them, plant nut trees or other trees providing food for game, etc. 4. Yes, throughout North America there are many exhibition animal farms operated on a commercial basis, a charge being made to look at the animals and most of the animals they use are raised on animal farms. 5. By talking conservation to others and by writing articles on conservation and having them published in local newspapers. 6. Re-stocking with fish and fur animals and in some instances planting foods for them will usually put such river back in the producing class again.

Question—What fur animals could be trapped in San Bernardino County, Calif.? 2. What two counties in Southern California would you recommend for trapping? 3. Where in San Bernardino County would you suggest for good trapping? 4. What are badger skins worth? 5. Where can I obtain the trapping laws of Calif.? 6. What animals of this section should a boy of 14 trap for? 7. Where can I get the trapping laws of my own state of Indiana?—D. W., Ind.

Answer—Coyote, wolf, skunk, badger, bob-cat, mink, 'coon, fox, etc. 2. The fur of Southern California is of very low quality and most of the profit in trapping that section is for bounty and I could not recommend any County in Southern California for fur trapping although in Mono and Inyo Counties in the central part of the state in the high Sierras, fur is of fairly good quality and reported plentiful. 3. Perhaps around Baldwin or Big Bear Lake. 4. Badger skins have low value at present, around two dollars for good section. 5. From Fish & Game Commission, Sacramento. 6. If you mean your own state which has better trapping than Southern California and better quality, I suggest you trap mainly for muskrat and mink, taking on some 'coon and skunk, weasel, etc. 7. From Department of Conservation, Indianapolis.

Question—Could I expect to trap fox, 'coon, mink, muskrat and weasel in Barney County, Mo? 2. What is a good muskrat set other than the den entrance set? 3. Is corn good bait for muskrats?—B. H., Mo.

Answer—Yes. 2. Traps placed in notches cut in floating logs in muskrat territory are well set. 3. Not as good as roots from marsh and swamp vegetation.

Question—What counties in Wyoming would you suggest as among the best for trapping?—R. J. H., Kans.

Answer—Park, Teton, Fremont and Lincoln, all being within high mountain territory.

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Question—Do muskrats eat minnows? 2. What is a tile in trapping terms? 3. Could you supply a list of all the raw fur buyers around Maple Shade, N.J.? 4. Do you think I can teach my part police dog to retrieve? 5. Do you think there are any mink around Maple Shade?—J. M. M., N.J.

Answer—I have never known them to, although they do eat frogs and snails sometimes. 2. A tile is a pipe used to carry water, often for drainage. 3. We do not have that information. 5. To some extent, almost any dog can be taught to retrieve. 5. Yes.

Question—Would a Benjamin Gas operated pistol be suitable for shooting skunk in traps? 2. Is it worthwhile to save the scent glands from animals and sell them to lure makers? 3. About what price do they bring? 4. Must they be preserved? 5. What is used for a preservative? 6. What was the highest price ever paid for muskrat skins? 7. For mink skins?—G. H., Ill.

Answer—They are sometimes used for that purpose but lack the accuracy of the regular .22 ammunition. 2. It usually is if the trapper catches many fur animals. 3. Around five dollars per quart. 4. Usually they should be. 5. Some trapper supply dealers handle odorless, ready prepared preservatives. 6. For a short time muskrats once sold for $4.75 per skin, but they have also in the past sold as low as 10c. 7. Around forty dollars for wild mink.

Question—What fur animals could I expect to trap in Southern Sheboygan County, Wisc.? 2. Is there any market for wild-weed? 3. Where could I expect to sell it? 4. Are F. C. Taylor and The Milwaukee Fur Center reliable houses for marketing pelts? 5. What is a good set for muskrat? 6. Mink? 7. Weasel? 8. Is a .22 rifle better for killing muskrat and mink in traps than a club? 9. Would three dozen traps be too many for a 14-year-old school-boy to handle during week-ends? 10. What is good lure for attracting muskrats other than prepared lure? 11. Same for mink? 12. What size should a stretcher be for wild rabbit skins?—Wisc. Trapper.

Answer—Mink, muskrat, weasel, 'coon, fox, otter, skunk, badger, etc. 2. Sometimes it has commercial value. 3. Try Maas & Steffen Inc., Pine St., St. Louis, Mo. 4. We believe so. 5. Sets made in shallow water at the edge of feed-beds are usually productive. 6. Dry, high-water abandoned muskrat dens are usually entered by travelling mink and when properly baited and lured and trap properly concealed at entrance or just within entrance, catch we believe as many mink as any set used at present. 7. Weasel can easily be induced to enter holes, hollow logs, stumps and man-built bait pens by the use of fresh, lean flesh and lure or scent and they step freely into uncovered traps, although if a trap set for weasel is carefully concealed it may also take mink. 8. No, and in many cases both animals can be drowned at the set. 9. We have found that two dozen traps properly set will keep the average school-boy busy, but in some instances, especially when trapping muskrats, more could be handled, especially on week-ends. 10. Apple extract, oil sweet-flag, pennyroyal, oil catnip, etc. 11. Mink urine, mink musk, muskrat musk, beaver castor, etc. 12. Muskrat stretchers can be used, but wild rabbit skins are not worth collecting and in many states it is illegal to trap muskrats as they are often classed as game.

Question—I found eleven dead raccoon on our farm this year, apparently of various ages and upon examination could find nothing visible wrong with them and I wish to know what disease you think they had? 2. Have you had similar reports from other sections? 3. What size hooks do you recommend for taking suckers? 4. Goggle eye? 5. Channel cats?—L. C., Ind.

Answer—It is possible that someone spread out poison, possibly for fox, but if you find any more dead raccoon that are fresh enough, ship to Department of Conservation, Indianapolis and write and tell them what you have found, or turn the specimen over to your local game protector for shipment. 2. No, excepting that 'coon have mange in some sections, but which seldom kills. 3. Size 4. 4. Number 6. 5. Number 6 or 8.

Question—Are there any fur animals worth trapping in the vicinity of Tenafly, Alpine or Creskill, N.J.?—E. K., N.J.

Answer—Such animals as muskrat, skunk, 'possum, weasel, fox, mink, etc. are found in that section.

Question—Do all female bears have young each year in Upper Mich.? 2. Do all female coyotes? 3. To be successful in trapping mink, must one use the droppings and urine? 4. What do you think of the foam rubber under-pan trap pads? 5. Are steel or iron trap drags better than ordinary wooden clogs? 6. Does the male coyote carry food to the young when they are in the den?—H. G., Mich.

Answer—No, however the majority do. 2. Same answer at one. 3. No, however, besides regular mink lure or scent, many trappers do sprinkle or spray the set with mink urine. 4. Foam rubber does retain some moisture and is apt to freeze in cold weather. 5. Pronged, steel drags allow a trapped animal to cross clearings and tangle in brush out of sight which is often an advantage and are easier to conceal. 6. As a rule they do not, neither do they normally inhabit the den while young are being raised, but there are exceptions and now and then a male coyote, wolf or fox will bring food to the young.

Question—Could muskrats be raised in a cage in Northwestern New York by a boy of fifteen? 2. If so, what food should be provided? 3. Where can I obtain a license to raise muskrats and other fur animals?—K. B., N.Y.

Answer—Yes, but it is best to obtain stock that has been pen raised and domesticated. 2. Carrots, parsnips, corn stalks, ground artichokes, apples, etc. 3. From your local game protector.

Question—Does scent or lure increase one's chances of catching fur animals? 2. Which lure or scent maker do you recommend? 3. Do you think the fox calls that attract by sound will work successfully? 4. Can you tell me where I can subscribe to American Woodsman if it is published at present and what is the subscription rate? 5. This Fall I plan on running a trapline for mink and 'coon along a creek which is too far from my home to look at the sets until after school and I wish to know how to make drowning sets to assure the animals will not get away in the daytime?—J. M., Minn.

Answer—We have every reason to believe it does, if the trapper makes good sets in connection with it. 2. We believe all advertisers in this magazine to be reliable. 3. When used properly we have had good reports. 4. We do not know. 5. The usual thing is to attach a rock to the trap light enough so the animal can drag it into deep water but will be unable to get back and an extension wire or chain should be either attached to the rock or trap to retrieve the animal, trap and rock, and the extension should of course be attached to some fairly solid object.

Question—Are mink found in Bergen County, N.J.? 2. Do skunks hibernate in Winter? 3. When do they den up? 4. What are good sets for skunk? 5. What are some of the wild plants around Bergen that could be marketed profitable? 6. Around Lexington, N.Y.?—A. M., N.J.

Answer—Yes. 2. They usually do excepting during very mild Winters. 3. About Christmas time, but they will continue to come out throughout the Winter during warm, thawing periods. 4. They may be trapped at den entrances or attracted to bait-pen or other bait sets by the use of flesh bait and scent or lure. 5. The only roots worth marketing are ginseng and goldenseal, unless you are satisfied with small wages. 6. Same answer as five.

Question—Does weasel have a scent gland from which it can emit an odor the same as a skunk does? 2. Do mink? 3. Are weasel and mink of the same family of animals? 4. Where are the scent glands located on mink, weasel and skunk? 5. Does the urine of rabbit attract weasel? 6. Will the noise made by blowing on a blade of grass held between the fingers attract fox? 7. What "plugs" are best for taking trout?—C. G., Wash.

Answer—Yes. 2. Yes. 3. Yes. 4. Surrounding the vent. 5. To some extent it will. 6. If you can imitate the cry of a wounded or injured rabbit, you can probably attract fox, wolves or 'cats. 7. Excepting when fishing for large trout, flies rate much higher than plugs and what will work one day or in one section may not be good the next day or in a different locality, therefore it is best to try several types and the fisherman should consider whether trout are feeding on surface food or underwater kinds. Real or imitation minnows are often used successfully for large species of trout.

Question—Would skunk live in a stream bed that is dry most of the year or do they prefer to live near streams? 2. After two years trapping experience trapping common and easy to trap fur animals, do you think I can now catch fox? 3. Will you explain briefly how to properly make the dirt-hole set for fox? 4. If I used fish for bait at a fox set, would a fox dig it up out of curiousity or do they ever eat fish?—L. S., Il.

Answer—Skunk will live about anywhere if they have a den that remains dry. 2. Foxes are no harder to trap than other fur animals, once you know how to do it and I suggest you obtain a good book on fox trapping and some good fox lure and bait and follow instructions in the book on proper treatment of fox traps and how to make good sets. 3. A dirt-hole fox set is an imitation of where a fox buried a piece of meat it did not desire to eat at the time and in the same manner that a dog does and bait and lure is placed in the hole and trap concealed in front of the hole which should be dug on an angle, and in the dirt dug from the hole. 4. Foxes do eat fish at times, but they seldom eat any bait that is placed for them, but they are interested in it enough to dig it up if the bait is prepared properly and that is all that is necessary.

Question—Could a person make a living by auto trapping in Scotts Bluff County, Nebr.? 2. If so, how many traps would be needed? 3. What is the reason that Eastern Nebraska has fox while Western Nebr. does not? 4. How many traps and what sizes needed for an Adirondack Mountain trapline?—H. B., Nebr.

Answer—Could make a living a least during the trapping period. 2. About 150. 3. Probably food conditions not right, perhaps coyotes keep them out. 4. Around one hundred fifty.

Question—A certain mink food manufacturer claims to have a mink food with a high percentage of meat in it and I am interested in knowing if that can be fed safely without additional food? 2. What kind or type of mink would be good to start with? 3. How many? 4. Could a person raise a small amount of mink and also run a trapline? 5. Is the latter part of March too late to breed mink? 6. Would ordinary straw be all right for lining nest boxes?—F-F-G Reader.

Answer—Without knowing the actual formula of the mink food in question, we cannot be sure, however, a high percentage of meat can be included in a mink ration and is usually an advantage. 2. The mutation type mink is what is bringing the big money at present. 3. That depends on the space you have, time to devote to the business and amount of cash you have for starting, although many start with a trio and add more as they gain in experience. 4. Yes, although pelting time is usually during the best trapping period of the Fall and breeding time comes during the Spring trapping, at least in most sections. 5. Mink usually breed during late February and early March. 6. Would be rather too coarse for general use and something like lawn clippings much better.

Question—How is the trapping around Englishtown, N.J.? 2. Where can I obtain sectional maps showing all the streams, lakes, ponds and sawmps of N.J.? 3. When is the fur of mink, weasel and muskrat prime in this section? 4. Will a number 1 guard type trap hold all the animals I have just mentioned? 5. Would there be any fur animals such as muskrats on a stream where I can find no den entrances? 6. Would there be any fur animals in a field through which a large stream flows and also has a large ditch crossing it?—C. F., N.J.

Answer—Fairly good for common fur animals. 2. From U.S. Geological Survey, Washington, D.C. who will on request send you a free index map of the state showing the name and location of the sectional maps they have for sale at low cost. 3. Mink and weasel are prime by Nov. 10 usually and muskrats about Feb. 1st, but sometimes pelts that are not what might be termed fully prime bring the most money and your trapping laws are in during the period when furs are at their best. 4. Yes. 5. Muskrats often have den entrances where it is very hard to locate them except during very low water periods and if the stream has such plants as cattail, three-square grass, sweet-flag, etc. growing in it, undoubtedly there are 'rats living along it. 6. Sounds like a good place to trap for mink, muskrat, skunk, 'possum, weasel and perhaps now and then a stray otter.

Question—Will you please send me the correct address as to where to send my questions to be answered in your magazine?—J. C., Kans.

Answer—Mail them direct to E. J. Dailey, Ogdensburg, N.Y. and if you desire personal answer, enclose stampel, return envelope with your inquiries.

Question—Do you think the new plastic waders durable enough for use on the trapline, that is will they stand up as well as sporting boots?—R. M. B., Nebr.

Answer—Where there were not too many snags we believe the new, lightweight plastic waders will give enough service to warrant buying them for use on the trapline, but they definiately will not last as long as a pair of hip, rubber boots and the heavier weight rubber type waders would probably be better than the plastic.

Question—If you were to choose between Wisconsin, Michigan and Wyoming for trapping and considering bounties, length of open seasons, etc., which would you decide on? 2. Do Government trappers have time to trap animals for fur as well as bounty? 3. Is there any work available in Northern Michigan that a trapper could do while getting established? 4. Could a good bounty trapper make a living for a family of four?—C. H., Mo.

Answer—Personally I would choose Wisconsin which is similar to Michigan but has more trapping territory and about the same quality furs and both Michigan and Wisconsin have a greater variety of furs plentiful enough to trap than Wyoming and the fur quality is better. 2. There are many types of Government trappers some employed by the year and who trap for the Government only, then there are state trappers who work on a salary and ranchers or rancher associations sometimes hire trappers to take care of their predatory problems and about the only type of predatory trapper who could also trap fur animals is the type who traps for bounty. 3. Yes, pulp cutting, lumbering, guiding, etc. 4. Experienced bounty trappers in good section can and do make a living for a family, but starting in new territory is much harder than trapping in a section with which the trapper is familiar.

Question—What are the fur animals around Calho, Nebr.? 2. On what animals is there a bounty in Nebr.? 3. Is it legal to use a .22 rifle for shooting trapped animals? 4. Does a 13-year-old boy need a license to trap in Nebr.? 5. How does Prairie Creek rate for trapping?—J. S., Nebr.

Answer—Mink, muskrat, 'possum, weasel, 'coon, skunk, badger, fox, coyote, etc. 2. Write Game, Forest and Parks Commission, Lincoln, Nebr. for that information or contact your local game protector. 3. Yes. 4. Same answer as two. 5. The best way to find out local conditions is to look over the stream and note all tracks, dens, claw-marks, partly eaten food, etc. and you will be learning something about animal habits when you do.

Question—What fur animals can I expect to trap around Big Stone Lake? 2. Is a .12 caliber pistol powerful enough for shooting trapped animals? 3. How long will lure remain good and still attract animals to my sets? 4. Is there a book published that describes trapping for mink, muskrat and 'coon only? 5. What kind of sets should I make for mink, muskrat and 'coon on the large peninsula shown on drawing I have mailed you?—L. E., Minn.

Answer—Mink, muskrat, 'coon, skunk, badger, fox, weasel, etc. 2. Fairly good for shooting small, trapped animals. 3. That depends on the type of lure, but it is usually best to buy fresh lure each season, especially for your best sets. 4. There are separate books on trapping available for those animals. 5. For muskrat use floats, sets at feed beds, at slides, in trails and at den entrances and for mink and 'coon make sets on logs extending into the water, in small spring branch streams flowing into the peninsula, at holes in the bank, in trails and runs, around old stumps and trees, driftwood, etc. Good idea to fix up your sets some time before the time to actually trap, narrowing up trails, baiting and luring holes, etc.

Question—Will you give me the name of a breeder of fitch? 2. What is the average number in a litter of fitch? 3. Would you advise using bait and lure within a box trap set for skunk?—A Young Trapper, O.

Answer—Since fitch have no fur value at present, or almost no value, we do not know of anyone raising them, but perhaps some of our fur farm advertisers might be able to supply you. 2. About five. 3. That would undoubtedly increase your chances.

Question—How is trapping in German Twp., Pa.? 2. What fur animals found around Edenborn, Pa.? 3. Where can I obtain maps showing all the streams of that vicinity? 4. Am I located within the ginseng district? 5. What is the cost of land in Penna.?—J. S., Pa.

Answer—Rates at least fair. 2. Mink, 'coon, muskrat, weasel, fox, skunk, 'possum, etc. 3. Try U. S. Geological Survey, Washington, D.C. 4. Yes. 5. That depends on the location, whether timbered, farmland, cut-over, etc.

Question—How does Audubon, N.J. and Audubon Park rate for trapping? 2. Could you expect a 13-year-old boy to do good trapping? 3. Where can I get topographical maps of N.J.? 4. Does ginseng and golden seal grow around here? 5. Are mink, raccoon, otter, marten, fisher, weasel and muskrat plentiful in the section inquired about? 6. Do muskrat and mink live in stream and marsh banks?—Young Trapper, N.J.

Answer—Fair to good. 2. A boy who studies good books on trapping and studies fur animal habits at every opportunity can expect to do very well on the trapline. 3. From U.S. Geological Survey, Washington, D.C. 4. Is within the ginseng and goldenseal belt and we have reason to believe that limited amounts of both do grow wild in that section. 5. Mink, muskrat, skunk, 'coon, weasel, 'possum, and fox are fairly plentiful in your section, but none of the others you have mentioned are found in your locality excepting now and then an otter. 6. Yes.

Question—Is there any small game around Pittsburgh, Pa.? 2. What is the best material for dyeing steel traps? 3. Does it rub off? 4. Is it soluble in water? 5. What is the proper way to wax traps? 6. Would a mixture of rotten eggs, limberger cheese and beaver castor extract create a good skunk lure? 7. What could be added that would improve it? 8. Is it better to trap alone or with a partner? 9. When does the trapping season open and close in Pa.? 10. Is it all right to use all-purpose lure?—P. S., Pa.

Answer—Rabbits, grouse, pheasant, squirrels, etc. 2. We believe that nothing equals logwood extract for that purpose, which is the dye removed from ground log-wood. 3. A certain percentage will, but enough will remain to thoroughly cover the traps. 4. Yes. 5. Place the traps in water and bring it to a boil, or the same hot solution in which traps are dyed will do, then melt enough wax on top of the water so that wax completely covers water, then remove traps through the wax. 6. Should be fairly good. 7. Asafoetida and skunk essence. 8. For farmland and settlement trapping, a partner is not needed, but for wilderness trapping it is more congenial and more safe to have a partner. 9. Dates change from year to year and to obtain latest information, write Penna. Game Commission, Harrisburg, Pa. or see your local game protector. 10. Trappers who do not trap extensively have found that one lure that is attractive to all flesh-eating animals does very well, but a lure attractive to flesh-eating animals would not prove satisfactory on muskrats or beaver which live on vegetation and barks.

Question—How deep must a "pit-fall" be to take raccoon? 2. Where can I obtain other trapping magazines? 3. Can squirrels be caught in box traps?—A. S., Mo.

Answer—'Coon have the ability and claws to climb out of most places and it would be necessary to dig a hole several feet deep and then line it with tin or something which would prevent the animal from climbing out. 2. Try you local newsstand. 3. Yes.

Question—What are the three best Western states for trapping mink, muskrat, beaver, 'coon, fox and otter? 2. Do you think if trapping of mink and beaver was prohibited for five years that they would be as plentiful as the period from 1800 to 1840? 3. Do you think that a man could make a living in Alaska trapping fur and predatory animals and panning gold? 4. Is there enough wilderness left in America where one could really get away from people and modern things? 5. Do you think trapping is as good a profession as any, to master and spend a lifetime at it?—Reader.

Answer—That is a hard question to answer considering that conditions change from year to year, but perhaps Idaho, Montana and Oregon would be about correct at present. 2. We do not have much authentic data on just how plentiful mink and beaver were during the remote past, but we do know we have more beaver in America at present than we had twenty-five years ago or fifty years ago and mink are not apt to get what might be called plentiful even if they were not trapped for many years because mink fight among themselves before they get real plentiful and old males kill off many young males and it is generally undersfood among trappers and conservationists that a certain amount of trapping does good by keeping the number of animals controlled so they will not inbreed to a point where degeneration sets in and weak strains die out. 3. Some men could, at least after they had obtained enough experience. 4. There is ample wilderness in Canada, Alaska and in the United States where a man could live a life as isolated as he might wish to do, but remote wilderness territory does not always mean that the best trapping or hunting is found there. 5. The fur trapping is not as good today as a few years ago due to unsettled world markets where most furs are sold, yet with lower prices on some furs, more bounties are being paid than for many years, and while trapping may not offer as much remuneration in the way of cash that some occupations offer, it is generally a healthful life and the trapper encounters many thrills and sport that the rest of the world knows nothing about, and so if a man is born a trapper, that should be his chosen occupation.

Question—Where can I obtain a price list of medicinal roots, barks and herbs?—R. K., N.Y.

Answer—Try Maas & Steffen Co., Pine St., St. Louis, Mo.

Question—I have found what I consider otter tracks on my trapline and desire to know where otter would be apt to stay along a small brook? 2. What size and type traps best for taking otter? 3. What is the best book on otter trapping?—J. C., Me.

Answer—Otter are long distance wanderers and while they do run small brooks, they usually have their dens around lakes, large streams, beaver ponds, etc., often living in bank dens or lodges abandoned by beavers, but sometimes digging dens for themselves. 2. A number 4 or 44 with teeth is what is needed and is legal in your state, although traps with teeth are not legal in all states. 3. There is no book to our knowledge that deals exclusively with otter trapping, however much valuable information on otter trapping can be found in our book "Trails To Successful Trapping" written by V. E. Lynch and which sells for $1.10 postpaid.

Question—How could I make muskrat or 'possum lure from things I could find around the farm? 2. How could I get the odors out of May-Apple roots, wild cherry leaves and twigs? 3. How do they make log-wood chips? 4. How could I get the juice out of carrots to use as a muskrat lure? 5. Could I make a boat from a 7x8x20 inch inner tube by covering it with canvas?—W. W., Mo.

Answer—You could make sun-rendered fish oil that would attract 'possum, but as to muskrats suggest that if you cannot afford to purchase ready prepared lure that you use baits instead such as bulbs and roots from marsh vegetation, carrots, apples, onions, etc. 2. It would be necessary that you have a still and steam distill such materials to obtain the oil. 3. Log-wood is the name of a dye-wood and the chips are cut from it by part grinding the logs, but trappers now use the dye removed from the chips for dyeing traps and which is cleaner, faster and better than boiling the traps with the chips. 4. As mentioned it would be best to slice the carrots and use them as bait and what is known as oil carrot and which has a powerful odor is distilled from carrot seed and there is some odorous oil in carrot tops, but practically none in the carrot itself. 5. We think a boat or raft that small would have but little usefulness.

Question—In your opinion, is the Selway Wilderness area a good locality for trapping marten? 2. Do you consider there are better sections in Idaho for marten trapping? 3. What counties in Idaho do you consider best for trapping marten?—R. W., N. Y.

Answer—Rates good with us. 2. We have had good reports as to Marten trapping in Beaverhead Mountains in Fremont County. 3. Fremont, Valley and Blaine are among the best.

Question—Is it legal to trap on state owned lands in New York? 2. Can one legally set up a tent on state lands to live in while trapping?—A Trapper, N.Y.

Answer—Yes, excepting where such lands have been set aside as sanctuaries and such sections are posted so they can be recognized when encountered. 2. It is necessary to obtain a permit from the state forest ranger in charge to place tents on state land and such permits must be renewed at certain times and it is allowable to use board floor and sidewalls or what is known as tent-platforms.

Question—Considering fur and bounty, which of the following states do you consider best for trapping: Michigan, Wisconsin, Minnesota or Pennsylvania?—C. H., Mo.

Answer—My choice would be Wisconsin.

Question—What is a good set for coyotes during periods when there is snow that thaws and freezes? 2. At what age is a weasel full grown?—H. S., Can.

Answer—Often the mound set can be used at such time with trap concealed on top of tall ant-hills usually above the snow or on top of part rotted straw-stacks, on abandoned muskrat and beaver lodges or it may be necessary to locate spots where snow does not reach, spots swept by the wind, etc. 2. At the age of about four years.

Question—Would raccoon be afraid of a box trap made of tin? 2. What would be a good way to remove a 'coon from a box trap and transport it to a cage? 3. How are turtle traps made? 4. Can 'coon be lured into box style traps? 5. How is trapping in Brown County, Kansas? 6. What do turtles eat? 7. What is good waterproofing for leather shoes? 8. Have squirrels from Kansas any fur value?—M. L., Kans.

Answer—Raccoons living in the farm country would probably not be, but if you dipped the trap in muddy water that would make it look more natural. 2. Dump it from the trap into a burlap bag. 3. Usually like other box style traps and from mesh wire, baited inside. 4. Yes. 5. Most of Brown County rates fair to good. 6. Flesh and fish. 7. Melted wax, applied hot and if the leather is hard, soften it first by rubbing in hot commercial sturgeon oil or neatsfoot oil. 8. No.

Question—I have heard that the price of muskrat skins is higher than a year ago at this time and if that is true, kindly advise about how much higher.

Answer—About 25% according to fur reports and recent sales.

Question—Can I expect to find muskrats in the Fall along a creek which dries up in Summer, but which has ample muskrat food growing in it? 2. Where could I expect to find field mice nests?—D. M., N.Y.

Answer—Often muskrats follow the water down to larger streams when they slowly dry up and return with the water in Fall, but if the stream has plenty of "cover" such as cattails, bulrush, etc. the 'rats may remain as they can live on the juices of vegetation without water to drink. 2. In stone piles, stumps, hollow logs and holes in the ground.

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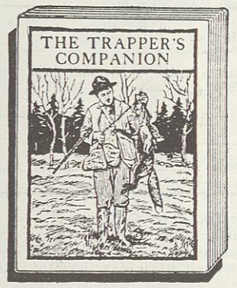

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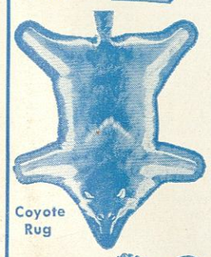
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Why put up with days . . . months . . . YEARS of discomfort, worry, and fear—if we provide you with the support you want and need? Learn NOW about this perfected truss-invention for most forms of reducible rupture. Surely you keenly desire . . . you eagerly CRAVE to enjoy most of life's activities and pleasures once again. To work . . . to play . . . to live . . . to love . . . with the haunting fear of Rupture lessened in your thoughts! Literally *thousands* of Rupture sufferers *have* entered this *Kingdom of Paradise Regained* . . . have worn our Appliance without the slightest inconvenience. Perhaps we can do as much for you. Some wise man said, "Nothing is impossible in this world"—and it is true, for where other trusses have failed is where we have had our greatest success in many cases! Even doctors—thousands of them—have ordered for themselves and their patients. Unless your case is absolutely hopeless *do not despair*. The coupon below brings our Free Rupture Book in plain envelope. Send the coupon now.

Patented AIR-CUSHION Support Gives *Wonderful Protection*

Think of it! Here's a surprising yet simple-acting invention that helps Nature support the weakened muscles gently but securely, day and night. Thousands of grateful letters express heartfelt thanks for relief from pain and worry,—results beyond the expectations of the writers. What is this invention—how does it work? Will it help me? Get the complete, fascinating facts on the Brooks Air-Cushion Appliance—send now for *free* Rupture Book.

Cheap—Sanitary—Comfortable

Rich or poor—ANYONE can afford to buy this remarkable, LOW-PRICED rupture invention! But look out for imitations and counterfeits. The Genuine Brooks Air-Cushion Truss is never sold in stores or by agents. Your Brooks is made up, after your order is received, to fit your particular case. You buy direct at the low "maker-to-user" price. The perfected Brooks is sanitary, lightweight, inconspicuous. Has no hard pads to gouge painfully into the flesh, no stiff, punishing springs, no metal girdle to rust or corrode. It is GUARANTEED to bring you heavenly comfort and security,—or it costs you NOTHING. The Air-Cushion works in its own unique way, softly, silently helping Nature support the weakened muscles. Learn what this marvelous invention may mean to you—send coupon quick!

C. E. BROOKS, Inventor

SENT on TRIAL!

No . . . don't order a Brooks now—FIRST get the complete, revealing explanation of this world-famous rupture invention, THEN decide whether you want to try for the comfort—the wonderful degree of freedom—the security—the blessed relief thousands of men, women and children have reported. They found the answer to their prayers! And you risk nothing as the complete Brooks is SENT ON TRIAL. Surely you owe it to yourself to investigate this no-risk trial. Send for the facts now—today—hurry! All correspondence strictly confidential.

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Brooks Appliance Co., 338-D State St., Marshall, Mich.

PROOF!

(In our files we have over 52,000 grateful letters like these)

THANKS FROM HAPPY FATHER

"I want to *thank* you very much for what your *wonderful* belt has done for my boy. He had a bad rupture. The very day we received the Appliance I put it on and that was the end of my troubles with his pain and crying. He has not worn it for about a year now."—Otto F. Blinn, 1500 N. Church, Belleville, Ill.

SOFT BALL PLAYER A BROOKS BOOSTER

"I ordered an Appliance some time back and it really does the job. I'm 38 years old, weight 200 lbs. Play 3rd base on our Soft Ball team. I really give the belt a real test. Thought I would have to give up my ball playing but not now with your rupture belt. Most people won't believe I have a rupture."—Wilbur Moritz, General Mdse., Jacob, Ill.

"IT'S TOPS"

"Words cannot express my feeling towards my Appliance. The minute I put it on, my first words were, 'It's Tops!' I hope another who suffers from such agony of a rupture could take my advice and get a Brooks Air Cushion Appliance."—Jack Sonnier, R1, Box 54A, Lafayette, La.

"DID EVERYTHING YOU CLAIMED"

"I am very happy to say that the truss which I purchased from you a little over a year ago did everything you claimed it would do. My rupture does not come down even though I wear the truss only part time. I shall be glad to tell anyone afflicted as I was what your Appliance did for me."—J. G. Rollinger, 242 Arlington Ave., Sarasota, Fla.

"FORGETS HE IS RUPTURED"

"I had this rupture seven years before I knew of your support, and was in the hospital at the time my son ordered the support for me. Until I started wearing your support I had not found anything to help me. Since wearing your support I can do all my work, and can forget that I am ruptured."—G. B. Russell, Box 106, Cherokee, Ala.

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338-D State St., Marshall, Mich.

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State whether for Man ☐ Woman ☐ or Child ☐